



LECTURES
ON THE
PRESENT POSITION OF CATHOLICS
IN ENGLAND:

ADDRESSED TO THE BROTHERS OF THE ORATORY.

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LECTURE III.
FABLE THE BASIS OF THE PROTESTANT VIEW.

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LECTURE III.

FABLE THE BASIS OF THE PROTESTANT VIEW.

It was my aim, Brothers of the Oratory, in my preceding Lecture, to investigate, as far as time and place allowed, how it was that the one-sided view of the great religious controversy, which commenced between Rome and England three centuries since, has been so successfully maintained in this country. Many things have changed among us during that long period; but the hatred and the jealousy entertained by the population towards the Catholic Faith, and the scorn and pity which is felt at the sight of its adherents, have not passed away, have not been mitigated. In that long period, society has undergone various alterations, public opinion has received a development new in the history of the world, and many remarkable revolutions in national principle have followed. The received views on the causes and the punishment of crime, on the end of Government, on the mutual relations of town and country, on international interests, and on many other great political

questions have sustained, to say the least, great modifications ; sciences, unknown before, bearing upon the economy of social life, have come into being ; medicine has been the subject of new doctrines, which have had their influence on various civil and municipal arrangements ; how is it then, that the feeling against Catholicism has remained substantially what it was in the days of Charles the Second or of George the Third ? How is it that Protestantism has retained its ascendancy, and that Catholic arguments and Catholic principles are at once misconstrued and ignored ? And what increases the wonder is, that it has happened otherwise externally to our own island ; there is scarcely a country besides, where Catholicism at least is not respected, even if it is not studied ; and what is more observable still, scarcely a country besides, once Protestant, in which Protestantism even exists at present,—if by Protestantism is understood the religion of Luther and Calvin. The phenomenon, great in itself, becomes greater, by its seeming to be all but peculiar to the British population.

And this latter consideration is important also, as it anticipates a solution of the difficulty which the Protestant, were he able, would eagerly adopt. He would be eager to reply, if he could, that the Protestant spirit has survived in the land amid so many changes in political and social science, because certain political theories were false, but Protestantism is true : but if this is the case, why has it not kept its ground and made its way in other countries also ? What cause can be assigned for its decay and almost extinction in those other countries, in Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and New England, diverse from each other in situation, in government, in language, and in character, where once it flourished ?

Evidently it must be a cause peculiar to England ; those foreign countries must have something in common with each other which they have not in common with us. Now what is peculiar to our country is an established tradition of Protestantism ; what those other countries have in common with each other, is the absence of such tradition. Fact and argument have had fair play in other countries ; they have not had fair play here : the religious establishment has forbidden them fair play. But fact and argument are the tests of truth and error ; Protestantism then has had an adventitious advantage in this country, in consequence of which it has not been tried, (as in the course of years otherwise it would have been tried, and has been tried elsewhere,) on its own merits. Instead then of concluding that it is true, because it has continued here during three centuries substantially the same, I should rather conclude that it is false, because it has not been able during that period to continue the same abroad. To the standing, compulsory Tradition existing here, I ascribe its continuance here ; to fact and reason, operating freely elsewhere, I ascribe its disappearance elsewhere.

This view of the subject is confirmed to us, when we consider, on the one hand the character of our countrymen, on the other the character of those instruments and methods by which the Tradition of Protestantism is perpetuated among them. It has been perpetuated, directly or indirectly, by the sanction of an oath, imposed on all those several sources of authority and influence, from which principles, doctrines, and opinions are accustomed to flow. There is an established Tradition of law, and of the clergy, and of the court, and of the Universities, and of literature, and of good society ;

and all these act upon a people, peculiarly susceptible of the claims of personal merit, of embodied authority, of constituted order, of rank, and of reputation in the world, and little sensitive in comparison of abstract argument, logical sequence, moral fitness, historical results, or foreign transactions.

This was the point at which I stopped last week ; now I shall continue my investigation, and I shall introduce what I have to say by means of an objection.

It may be objected, then, to the conclusions at which I have arrived, that I on my part have simply ignored the fact of the innumerable multitude of independent testimonies, which every one of the divines, the scholars, the lawyers, the men of letters, the statesmen, the men of the world, who have made the last three centuries glorious in Britain, has borne in his turn, in favour of Protestantism and to the disadvantage of the Catholic Religion.

Bacon and Hooker, Taylor and Chillingworth, Hampden, Clarendon, and Falkland, Russell, Somers, and Walpole, Hobbes and Locke, Burnet and Addison, Hume and Robertson, Warburton and Horsley, Pitt and Fox, Walter Scott and Hallam, and a multitude of other illustrious names, nay, the whole host of educated men, are all separate authorities ; each speaks for himself ; they do not copy, the one from the other : there are among them men of extensive reading, profound philosophy, intimate knowledge of the world : they are all men of intelligence, and at least able to give an opinion. It is absurd to say otherwise. This simple consideration, it may be said, overthrows from its foundation the argument drawn out in my last week's Lecture, about the traditional character of Protestantism in England.

Indeed my argument turns against myself: for I allowed on that occasion that a number of distinct testimonies, conspiring together into one view or representation, was a real and sound reason, nay, among the strongest of conceivable reasons, in its behalf: now this is just the state of the case as regards the argument for Protestantism, as drawn from the common consent of the English court, clergy, bar, literature, and general society.

This is what will be said; and I reply as follows:—I do not deny that there are great names on the side of Protestantism, which require to be considered by themselves. Minds, which certainly are superior to the influences of party, the prejudices of education, the suggestions of self-interest, the seductions of place and position, and tyranny of public opinion. And again, there are Protestant arguments, clear and broad, which remain, whether Protestantism is received, or whether it is not. I allow all this: but now I am considering, not the Protestantism of the few, but of the many: those great men, and those philosophical arguments, whatever be their weight, have no influence with the many. Crowds do not assemble in Exeter Hall, mobs do not burn the Pope, from reverence for Lord Bacon, Locke, or Butler, or for any thing those gifted men have recorded. I am treating of the unpopularity of Catholicism now and here, as it exists, in the year 1851, and in London, or in Edinburgh, or in Birmingham, or in Bristol, or in Manchester, or in Glasgow: among the gentlemen and yeomen of Yorkshire, Devonshire, and Kent; in the Inns of Court, and in the schools and colleges of the land; and, I say, this Tradition does not flow from the mouth of the half-dozen wise, or philosophic, or learned men who can be sum-

moned in its support, but is a tradition of nursery stories, school stories, public-house stories, club-house stories, drawing-room stories, platform stories, pulpit stories ; a tradition of newspapers, magazines, reviews, pamphlets, romances, novels, poems, and light literature of all kind, literature of the day ; a tradition of selections from the English classics, bits of poetry, passages of history, sermons, chance essays, extracts from books of travel, anonymous anecdotes, lectures on prophecy, statements and arguments of polemical writers, made up into small octavoës for class-books, and into pretty miniatures for presents ; a tradition floating in the air ; which we found in being when we first came to years of reason ; which has been borne in upon us by all we saw, heard, or read, in high life, in parliament, in law courts, in general society ; which our fathers told us had ever been in their day ; a tradition, therefore, truly universal and immemorial, and good as far as a tradition can be good, but after all, not more than a tradition is worth. I mean, requiring some ultimate authority to make it trustworthy. Trace up, then, the tradition to its very first startings, its roots and its sources, if you are to form a judgment, whether it is more than a tradition. It may be a good tradition, and yet after all good for nothing. What profit, though ninety-nine links of a chain be sound, if the topmost is broken ? Now I do not hesitate to assert, that this Protestant Tradition, on which English faith hangs, is wanting in the first link. Fierce as are its advocates, and high as is its sanction, yet, whenever we can pursue it through the mist of immemorial reception in which it commonly ends, and arrive at its beginnings, forthwith we find a flaw in the argument. Either facts are not forthcoming, or they are not sufficient for the purpose : sometimes

they turn out to be imaginations or inventions, sometimes exaggerations, sometimes misconceptions ; something or other comes to light which blunts their efficiency, and throws suspicion on the rest. Testimonies which were quoted as independent, turn out to be the same, or to be contradictory of each other, or to be too improbable to be true, or to have no good authority at all : so that our enemies find they cannot do better after all, than fall back on the general reception of the Tradition itself, as a reason for receiving it ; and they find it prudent to convict Catholics of all manner of crimes, on the ground of their being notoriously accused of them.

Hard measure, scanty justice ! It is a principle of English law, that no one should bring a charge against another without being under the obligation of supporting it. Where should we be, any one of us, who would be safe, if any person who chose might, at any moment he would, impute to us what he pleased, bring us into court, call no witnesses, and obtain our conviction on his simple assertion ? Why, at very least, an accuser is bound to make oath of the truth of what he says ; and that is but the first step of an investigation, not the termination of the process. And he must swear to a fact, not to an opinion, not to a surmise, not to what he has heard others say, but to what he has witnessed or knows. Nay, even though there be reasons for being sure of the guilt of the accused, it is a maxim of our law not to make him criminate himself, but to aim at convicting him by other means and other men. It seems a plain dictate of common equity, that an accuser should have something to say for himself, before he can put the accused on his defence.

This righteous rule is simply set aside in the treatment

of Catholics and their religion. Instead of the *onus probandi*, as it is called, the burden of proof, lying with the accuser, it is simply thrown upon the accused. Any one may get up of a sudden, and may say what he will to our prejudice, without producing any warrant at all for the truth of his charge. He is not called upon to establish his respectability, or to state his opportunities or methods of knowing; he need not give presumptive proof of his allegation; he need not give his authorities; he need only accuse; and upon this the Protestant public turns round to the poor Catholic, and asks what he has to say in his defence, as if he had yet any thing to defend. There is a saying, that "a fool can ask more questions than a hundred wise men can answer:" and a bigot or a fanatic may be quite as successful. If a man presented himself this moment and said to me, "You robbed a person in the street of his pocket-book some ten years ago," what could I possibly say, except simply, "I did not?" How could I prove it was false, when I had not been informed of the town, or the year, or the date, or the person on whom the pretended offence was committed? Well, supposing my accuser went on to particulars, and said that I committed the crime in Birmingham, in the month of June, in the year 1840, and in the instance of a person of the name of Smith. This, of course, would be something, but no one would say even then it was enough, that is, supposing I had to reply to him on the spot. At the very moment I might not be able to say where I was on the specified day, and so I could only repeat as emphatically as I was able, that the charge was utterly untrue.

Next, supposing me to ask his reasons for saying it, how he knew it was I? did he see me? or was he told by

an eye-witness? and supposing he were to decline to give me any information whatever, but contented himself with saying "that I was shuffling and evasive, for the thing was quite notorious." And, next, supposing I suddenly recollected that, up to the year 1845, I had never once been in Birmingham in the course of my life; yet, on my stating this, the accuser were to cry out that I should not escape, in spite of my attempt to throw dust in his eyes; for he had a score of witnesses to prove the fact, and that, as to the exact year, it was a mere point of detail, on which any one might be mistaken. And supposing, on this unsupported allegation, a magistrate, without witnesses brought, or oath administered, or plausibility in the narrative, in spite of the accuser's character, which was none of the best, in spite of the vagueness of his testimony, were to send me to the house of correction,—I conceive public opinion would say I was shamefully treated.

But further, supposing when I was safely lodged in prison, some anonymous writer, in some third-rate newspaper, were boldly to assert that all priests were in the practice of stealing pocket-books from passengers in the streets; and in proof thereof were to appeal to the notorious case of a priest in Birmingham who had been convicted of the offence, and moreover to the case of another, given in detail in some manuscript or other, contained somewhere or other in the royal library of Munich, and occurring some time or other between the seventh and the seventeenth centuries; and supposing, upon this anonymous letter, petitions were got up and signed numerously, and dispatched to the Imperial Parliament, with the object of sending all priests to the treadmill for a period not exceeding six months, as

reputed thieves, whenever they were found walking in the public thoroughfares;—would this answer an Englishman's ideas of fairness or of humanity?

Now I put it to the experience,—I put it to the conscience of the Protestant world,—whether such is not the justice which it deals out to Catholics, as a matter of course. No evidence against us is too little; no infliction too great. Statement without proof, though inadmissible in every other case, is all fair when we are concerned. A Protestant is at liberty to bring a charge against us, and challenge us to refute, not any proof he brings, for he brings none,—but his simple assumption or assertion. And, perhaps, we accept his challenge, and then we find we have to deal with matters so vague or so minute, so general or so particular, that we are at our wits' end to know how to grapple with them. For instance, “Every twentieth man you meet is a Jesuit in disguise;” or, “Nunneries are, for the most part, prisons.” How is it possible to meet such sweeping charges? The utmost we can do, in the nature of things, is to show that this particular man, or that, is not a Jesuit; or that this or that particular nunnery is not a prison; but who said he was?—who said it was? What our Protestant accuser asserted was, that every *twentieth* man was a Jesuit, and *most* nunneries were prisons. How is this refuted by clearing this or that person or nunnery of the charge? Thus, if the accuser is not to be called on to give proofs of what he says, we are simply helpless, and must sit down meekly under the imputation.

At another time, however, a definite fact is stated, and we are referred to the authority on which it is put forward. What is the authority? Albertus Magnus, perhaps, or Gerson, or Baronius, with a silence about volume and

page ; their works consisting of five, ten, fifteen, twenty, or thirty folios, printed in double columns. How are we possibly to find the needle in this stack of hay ? Or, by a refinement of unfairness, perhaps a wrong volume or page is carelessly given ; and when we cannot find there the statement which our opponent has made, we are left in an unpleasant doubt whether our ill success is to be ascribed to our eyes or to his pen.

Sometimes, again, the crime charged on us is brought out with such startling vividness and circumstantial finish, as seem to carry their own evidence with them, and to dispense, in the eyes of the public, with the references which in fairness should attend it. The scene is laid in some fortress of the savage Apennine, or in secluded Languedoc, or in remote Poland, or the high table-land of Mexico, or it is a legend about some priest of a small village of Calabria, called Buonavalle, in the fourteenth century ; or about a monk of the monastery of S. Spirito, in S. Filippo d'Argiro, in the time of Charlemagne. Or the story runs, that Don Felix Malatesta de Guadalope, a Benedictine monk of Andalusia, and father confessor to the Prince of the Asturias, who died in 1821, left behind him his confessions in manuscript, which were carried off by the French, with other valuable documents, from his convent, which they pillaged in their retreat from the field of Salamanca ; and that, in these confessions, he frankly avows that he had killed three of his monastic brothers of whom he was jealous, had poisoned half-a-dozen women, and sent off in boxes and hampers to Cadiz and Barcelona thirty-five infants ; moreover, that he felt no misgivings about these abominable deeds, because, as he observes with great *naïveté*, he had every day, for many years, burnt a candle to the

Blessed Virgin; had cursed periodically all heretics, especially the royal family of England; had burned a student of Coimbra for asserting the earth went round the sun; had worn about him, day and night, a relic of St. Diego; and had provided that five hundred masses should be said for the repose of his soul within eight days after his decease.

Tales such as this, the like of which it is very easy to point out in print, are suitably contrived to answer the purpose which brings them into being. A Catholic, who, in default of testimony offered in their behalf, volunteers to refute them on their internal evidence, and sets about (so to say) cross-examining them, finds himself at once in an untold labyrinth of embarrassments. First he inquires, *is there a village in Calabria of the name of Buonavalle? is there a convent S. Spirito in the Sicilian town specified? did it exist in the time of Charlemagne? who were the successive confessors of the Prince of the Asturias during the first twenty years of this century? what has Andalusia to do with Salamanca? when was the last *Auto da fe* in Spain? did the French pillage any convent whatever in the neighbourhood of Salamanca about the year 1812?*—questions sufficient for a school examination. He goes to his maps, gazetteers, guide books, travels, histories;—soon a perplexity arises about the dates: are his editions *recent* enough for his purpose? do their historical notices go *far enough back*? Well, after a great deal of trouble, after writing about to friends, consulting libraries, and comparing statements, let us suppose him to prove most conclusively the utter absurdity of the slanderous story, and to bring out a lucid, powerful, and unanswerable reply: who cares for it by that time? who cares for the story itself? it has

done its work ; time stops for no man ; it has created or deepened the impression in the minds of its hearers that a monk commits murder or adultery as readily as he eats his dinner. Men forget the process by which they received it, but there it is, clear and indelible. Or supposing they recollect the particular slander ever so well, still they have no taste or stomach for entering into a long controversy about it ; their mind is already made up ; they have formed their views ; their informant may indeed have been misinformed in some of his details ; it can be nothing more. Who can impose on them the perplexity and whirl of going through a bout of controversy, where “one says,” and “the other says,” and “*he* says that *he* says that *he* does not say or ought not to say, what he does say or ought to say ?” It demands an effort and strain of attention which they have no sort of purpose of bestowing. The Catholic cannot get a fair hearing ; his book remains awhile in the shop windows, and then is taken down again. So true is this, from the nature of the human mind, that even though my present audience is well disposed, not hostile, to Catholicism, I should think it imprudent to enter into any minute investigation of this or that popular calumny, from my conviction that I should be detailing matters, which, except in the case of the very few, would engross without interesting, and weary without making an impression.

Yet I think I may be able, or at least I will try, without taxing your patience to the utmost, to bring before you two or three actual specimens of the mode in which the accusation against Catholics is conducted ; which may serve to give you some insight into the value of the Tradition which kings, lords, and commons are so zealous in upholding. The mighty Tradition flows on,

replenished and refreshed continually by rivulets which, issuing from new fountain heads, make their way, in faithful and unfailing succession, into the main stream. I am going to put my finger on three of these small fountain heads of the Tradition,—which, as I have already complained, are not commonly accessible ;—they shall not be springs of a vulgar quality, but they shall represent the intelligence, the respectability, and the strong sense of English society. The first shall be a specimen of the Tradition of Literature, the second of the Tradition of Wealth, and the third of the Tradition of Gentlemen.

1. The first, which has to do with names well known in the aristocracy of talent and learning, will be somewhat tedious, do what I will ; and I shall introduce it with a story. It is related by the learned Dr. Bentley, in his controversy with Boyle, about a century and a half ago, on some point of historical criticism. In the course of that controversy, his opponent happened to spell wrongly the name of a Greek town ; and, when he was set right, he made answer that it was the custom of our English writers so to spell it, and he proceeded to quote as many as five of them in proof of his assertion. On this Bentley observes : “ An admirable reason, and worthy to be his own ; as if the most palpable error, that shall happen to obtain and meet with reception, must therefore never be mended.” After this, the “slashing” critic goes on to allude to the instance of an unlearned English priest, truly or not I know not, “who for thirty years together” (perhaps it was on taking the first ablution in the mass) “had always said, ‘Quod ore mumpsimus,’ instead of ‘Quod ore sumpsimus,’” and when, says

Bentley, “a learned man told him of his blunder, ‘I’ll not change, says he, my old Mumpsimus for your new Sumpsimus.’” Now this happily applies to the subject which I am going to illustrate, as you will presently see.

I need not remind you how much is said among Protestants of the gross ignorance and superstition of the middle age; indeed, we Catholics of the present date are considered its legitimate and veritable heirs. On this subject, one of the best read, most dispassionate, and deservedly esteemed writers of the present day, who, if any one, might be supposed, in historical matters, an original authority, in his “View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages,” writes as follows:—

“In the very best view that can be taken of monasteries,” he says, after allowing that many might be above reproach, “their existence is deeply injurious to the general morals of a nation. They withdraw men of pure conduct and conscientious principle from the exercise of social duties, and leave the common mass of human vice more unmixed. Such men are always inclined to form schemes of ascetic perfection, which can only be fulfilled in retirement; but, in the strict rules of monastic life, and under the influence of a grovelling superstition, their virtue lost all its usefulness. They fell implicitly into the snares of crafty priests, who made submission to the Church, not only the condition, but the measure of all praise.” Now comes the passage to which I am directing your attention. Observe, he is going on to his *proof* of what he has asserted. “He is a good Christian, says Eligius, a saint of the seventh century, who comes frequently to church, who presents an oblation that it may be offered to God on the altar; who does not taste the fruits of his land till he has consecrated a part of

them to God ; who can repeat the Creed or the Lord's Prayer. Redeem your souls from punishment, while it is in your power ; offer presents and tithes to Churches, light candles in holy places, as much as you can afford, come more frequently to church, implore the protection of the saints ; for, if you observe these things, you may come with security at the day of judgment to say, ' Give unto us, O Lord, for we have given unto Thee ! ' ” The author then continues, “ With such a *definition of the Christian character*, it is not surprising that any *fraud and injustice* became honourable, when it contributed to the riches of the clergy and glory of their order¹. ”

Now observe, first, he quotes St. Eligius, or Eloi, in order to show that Catholics were at that time taught that true Christianity consisted, not in the absence of fraud and injustice, or, again, of immorality, hatred, or strife,—but in merely coming to church, paying tithes, burning candles, and praying to the saints. But, observe next, he does not quote from St. Eligius' own work, or refer to it on his own authority, but, well-read man as he is, still he simply relies on the authority of two other writers, and (what many well-read men would have omitted to do), he candidly confesses it. He refers to Dr. Robertson, the Scotch historian, and the celebrated German historian and critic, Mosheim. I do not see, then, that much blame attaches to this writer for publishing what you will see presently is a most slanderous representation, beyond, indeed, his taking for granted the Protestant Tradition, his exercising faith in it as true, his not doubting the fidelity of the two authors in question, and, therefore, in a word, his saying, “ Mumpsimus,” and passing it on.

¹ Hallam's Middle Ages, vol. iii. p. 353.

Next we come to Dr. Robertson, the historian of Scotland, Charles the Fifth, and America, the friend of Hume, Adam Smith, Gibbon, and a host of literati of the latter part of last century. In his history of the reign of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, who lived at the time of the Reformation, after observing that "the Christian religion degenerated, during those ages of darkness, into an illiberal superstition;" that "the barbarous nations, instead of aspiring to *sanctity and virtue*, imagined that they satisfied every obligation of duty by a scrupulous observance of external ceremonies," Dr. Robertson annotates as follows: "*all the religious maxims and practices of the dark ages are a proof of this. I shall produce one remarkable testimony in confirmation of it, from an author canonized by the Church of Rome, St. Eloy, or Eligius.*" And then he proceeds to quote, nearly in the same words as Mr. Hallam, though omitting some clauses and adding others, a translation from the passage which Mosheim sets down in his history, as if the original text of the saint's. And then he adds the remark of Dr. Maclaine, Mosheim's English translator, whom he is pleased to call "learned and judicious," and whose remark he calls a "very proper reflection." This remark is as follows: "We see here," says Maclaine, "a large and ample description of the character of a good Christian, in which there is not *the least* mention of the love of God, resignation to his will, obedience to his laws, or of justice, benevolence, and charity towards men." Here, then, we trace our "Mumpsimus" a step higher; from Hallam to Robertson, from Robertson to the "learned and judicious" Maclaine.

Robertson and Maclaine were Scotchmen; but the Tradition was not idle the while in the south either.

There was a certain learned Mr. White, well known, somewhat later than Robertson, in the University of Oxford. He was Professor of Arabic in that seat of learning, and happened one year to preach a set of Lectures which added most considerably to his reputation. I should not have noticed the circumstances attending them, did they not throw light on the measure of authority due to the divines, scholars, historians, statesmen, lawyers, and polite writers, who are the doctors of the Protestant Tradition. The Lectures in question, which are delivered at Oxford yearly, on some theological subject, are the appointment of the governors of the place ; who, feeling the responsibility attached to this exercise of patronage, anxiously look about for the safest, or the most brilliant, or the most rising, or the most distinguished of their members, to whom to commit the guardianship of Protestantism, and the fair fame of the University. Some such person Mr. White was considered ; and, on his appointment, he selected for his lectures a subject of great interest,—the rise and genius of Mahomet and his religion. Of learning he had enough ; eloquence, perhaps, he wanted ; yet what must have surprised his audience, when the time came for his exhibition, was the special elegance, splendour, and vivacity which showed themselves in his style. His periods, far from savouring of the austereness of an Oriental scholar, displayed the imagery, the antithesis, the flow, and the harmony of a finished rhetorician. The historian Gibbon, no mean judge of composition, goes out of his way to speak of his Lectures as “a volume of controversy” more “elegant and ingenious” than any Mahomedan pulpit was likely to have produced, had Oxford become Mahomedan instead of Protestant ;

and is pleased to observe that the writer "sustains the part of a lively and eloquent advocate," while he "sometimes rises to the merit of an historian and a philosopher." Such were the Lectures delivered, and such was the reputation in consequence obtained by the Arabic Professor: however, after a time, it came to light that a great portion of the volume, at least many of its finest passages, were the writing of another. Indeed he was obliged to confess that he employed in the work, and actually paid for it, a country curate in Devonshire (who, I think, had once been a dissenting preacher), whom he supplied with the raw material of thought, and who returned it back to him in a dress suitable to the audience to whom it was to be presented. This was the man, who was getting credit for what was not his own, who, in treating of Mahomet, must make a diversion from his course,—which never comes amiss in a Protestant volume,—in order to bring a charge of incapability and pretence against the Catholic Church; and what should he unluckily choose for the instrument of his attack but the identical passage of St. Eligius, and on that same authority of Mosheim, which had already been adopted by Hallam, Robertson, and Maclaine? Mr. White writes thus:—

"No representation can convey stronger ideas of the melancholy state of religion in the seventh century, than the description of the character of a good Christian, as drawn at that period by St. Eligius, or Eloi, Bishop of Noyon." And then he quotes the extract, already cited, from the pages of Mosheim.

And now we are approaching the fountain head of the Tradition, but first I must just allude to one other author of name, who bears the same testimony, to "Mumps-

mus," and simply on the same authority. This is an elegant writer, a divine and an Archdeacon of the Established Church, who in the year 1773, published "Remarks on Ecclesiastical History." In the table of contents prefixed to the third volume, we are referred to "Eligius' *system* of Religion;" and turning to the page set against that descriptive title, we are told, "In this seventh century, . . . monkery flourished prodigiously, and the monks and Popes were in the firmest union. As to true religion, here is the *sum and substance* of it, as it is *drawn up* for us by Eligius, one of the principal saints of that age." And then follows the cut-and-dried passage as given by Mosheim.

Now, at last, let us proceed to the first father of Mumpsimus, the Lutheran Mosheim himself. His words run thus in his Ecclesiastical History: "During this century (the seventh) true religion lay buried under a senseless mass of superstitions, and was unable to raise her head. The earlier Christians . . . taught that Christ had made expiation for the sins of men by his death and his blood; the latter" (those of the seventh century), "seemed to inculcate that the gates of heaven would be closed against none who should enrich the clergy or the church with their donations. The former were studious to maintain a holy simplicity, and to follow a pure and chaste piety, the latter place the *substance* of religion in *external rites and bodily exercises*." And then, in order to illustrate this contrast, which he has drawn out, between the spirituality of the first Christians and the formality of the Papists, he quotes the famous passage which has been the matter of our investigation.

Brothers of the Oratory, take your last look at the Protestant Tradition, ere it melts away into thin air

from before your eyes. It carries with it a goodly succession of names, Mosheim, Jortin, Maclaine, Robertson, White, and Hallam. It extends from 1755 to the year 1833. But in this latter year, when it was now seventy-eight years old, it met with an accident attended with fatal consequences. Some one for the first time, instead of blindly following the traditional statement, thought it worth while first to consult St. Eligius himself. His work is in every good library; but to no one had it occurred to take it from the shelf, till the present Protestant Dean of Durham, Dr. Waddington, while he was engaged in publishing an Ecclesiastical History, at the date I have named. At first, indeed, he relied on his Protestant masters; and, taking Mosheim for his guide, and quoting St. Eligius from his volume, he observes that, as the saint was “a person of influence in his day, we may venture to record what, in his opinion, was the *sum and substance* of true religion.” Then follows the old extract. This is at the 153rd page of Dr. Waddington’s work; but, by the time he got to page 298, he had turned to the original, and the truth came out. He found that the received Protestant extract was only a small portion, nay, only sentences picked out here and there, of a very long sermon,—other sentences of which, close by, and in the very midst of those actually quoted, contained all those very matters, the supposed absence of which was the very charge brought against St. Eligius by Mosheim, Maclaine, Robertson, Jortin, White, and Hallam. They, forsooth, pure Protestants, had been so shocked and scandalized, that there was nothing of moral virtue in the saint’s idea of a Christian, nothing of love of God, or of man; nothing of justice, of truth, of knowledge, of honesty; whereas, in matter of fact, there

turned out to be an abundance of these good things, drawn out in sentences of their own, though certainly not in the other sentences which those authors had extracted. I will quote what Dr. Waddington says, on his discovery of his mistake :—

He says that “the sense, and even the words” of the passage which he had cited, “had been previously retailed both by Robertson and Jortin, and the original quoted by Mosheim;” but that he had since “been led to look more particularly into the life of Eligius, as it is published in the ‘*Spicilegium Dacherii*?’” Then, he continues, “he”—that is himself, the Author—“was pleased to discover very excellent precepts and pious exhortations scattered among the strange matter”—so he speaks as a Protestant—“with which it abounds. But at the same time it was with great sorrow and some shame, that he ascertained the *treachery* of his historical conductor,” that is, Mosheim. “The expressions cited by Mosheim,” he continues, “and cited, too, with a direct reference to the ‘*Spicilegium*,’” in which the Sermon is contained, “were forcibly brought together *by a very unpardonable mutilation* of his authority. They are to be found, indeed, in a Sermon preached by the Bishop, but found in the *society of so many good and Christian maxims*, that it had been charitable entirely to overlook them, as it was certainly unfair to weed them out and heap them together, without notice of the rich harvest that surrounds them.”

He then proceeds to quote some of the exhortations of the Saint to which he alludes, and which Mosheim had omitted. For instance :—“Wherefore, my brethren, love your friends *in* God, and love your enemies *for* God, for he who loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law. . . .

He is a good Christian who believes not in charms or inventions of the devil, but places the whole of his hope in Christ alone ; who receives the stranger with joy, as though he were receiving Christ Himself . . . who gives alms to the poor in proportion to his possessions . . . who has no deceitful balances nor deceitful measures . . . who both lives chastely himself, and teaches his neighbours and his children to live chastely, and in the fear of God. . . . Behold, ye have heard, my brethren, what sort of people good Christians are . . . to the end that ye be true Christians, always ponder the precepts of Christ in your mind, and also fulfil them in your practice. . . . Keep peace and charity, recal the contentious to concord, avoid lies, tremble at perjury, bear no false witness, commit no theft . . . observe the Lord's day . . . do as you would be done by . . . visit the infirm . . . seek out those who are in prison." So the holy Bishop proceeds ; and *then* he adds, " If you observe *these things*, you may appear boldly at God's tribunal in the day of judgment, and say, Give, Lord, as we have given." Scattered about in the midst of these exhortations, are the few sentences, excellent also, in spite of Dr. Waddington, though not the whole of Christianity, which the Protestant writers have actually quoted.

Such is the Sermon upon which Dr. Maclaine makes this (what Robertson calls) "very proper reflection." "We see here a large and ample description of the character of a good Christian, in which there is not *the least* mention of the love of God, resignation to his will, obedience to his laws, or justice, benevolence, or charity towards men." But as Mosheim and his followers have their opinion of St. Eligius, so, in turn, has Dr. Waddington his opinion of Mosheim. "The impression," he says, "which Mosheim by "stringing together" certain sentences "with-

out any notice of the context, conveys to his readers, is *wholly false*; and the *calumny* thus indirectly cast upon his author is not the less reprehensible, because it falls on one of the obscurest Saints in the Roman calendar. If the very essence of history be truth, and if any deliberate violation of that be sinful in the profane annalist, still less can it deserve pardon or mercy in the historian of the Church of Christ."

This, as I have said, took place in 1833: two years later the exposure was repeated, in a brilliant paper inserted by Dr. Maitland in an Ecclesiastical Magazine, the Editor drawing the especial attention of his readers to his correspondent's remarks².

However, after all, I could not help expressing to myself, after surveying the whole course of their exposure, my intense misgivings that their efforts would be in vain. I knew enough of the Protestant mind, to be aware how little the falsehood of any one of its traditions is an effectual reason for its relinquishing it; and I find too truly that I was not mistaken in my anticipation. Mumpsimus still reigns. In a new edition of Mosheim's history, published in 1841, the editor, a recent successor of Mr. White in the Oxford lectures, reprints those precious legacies, the text of Mosheim, the "very proper reflection" of Maclaine, and the garbled quotation from St. Eligius, for the benefit of the rising generation of divines, without a word of remark, or any thing whatever to show that a falsehood had been uttered, a falsehood traditionally perpetuated, a falsehood emphatically exposed.

2. I have given you, my brothers, a specimen of the

² I do not add Dr. Lingard as being a Catholic authority.

Tradition of Literature ; now I proceed to the Tradition of Wealth, Respectability, Virtue, and Enlightened Religion ; for all these, in a country like ours, are supposed to go together, the Tradition of our merchants, traders, and men of business, and of all who have any thing to lose, and are therefore conscientiously attached to the Constitution. And I shall select, as the organ of their Tradition, a writer, whom they will at once acknowledge to be an unexceptionable representative of their ideas. If there be a periodical of the day which lays claim to knowledge of this globe, and of all that is in it, which is Catholic in its range of subjects, its minute curiosity, and its world-wide correspondence, which has dealings with all the religions of the earth, and ought to have the largeness and liberality of view which such manifold intercourse is calculated to create, it is the “ Times ” newspaper. No one avows so steady a devotion to the great moral precepts embodied in the Decalogue, or professes so fine a sense of honour and duty, or is so deeply conscious of his own influence on the community, and of the responsibilities which it involves, or so alive to the truth of the maxim, that, in the general run of things, honesty is the best policy. What noble, manly, disinterested sentiments does he utter ! what upright intention, strong sense, and sturdy resolution, are the staple of his composition ! what indignation does he manifest at the sight of vice or baseness ! what detestation of trickery ! what solemn resolve to uphold the oppressed ! what generous sympathy with innocence calumniated ! what rising of heart against tyranny ! what gravity of reprobation ! how, when Catholic and Protestant are in fierce political antagonism, he can mourn over breaches of charity, in which he protests the while he has had no share ! with

what lively sensibility and withering scorn does he encounter the accusation, made against him by rivals every half-dozen years, of venality or tergiversation! If any where is to be found the sternness of those who are severe because they are pure—who may securely cast stones, for none can cast at them—who, like the Cherub in the poem, are “faithful found among the faithless”—you would say that here at length you had found the incorruptible, the guide in a bad world, who amid the illusions of reason and the sophistries of passion, sees the path of duty on all questions whatever, with a luminousness, a keenness, and a certainty special to himself. When, then, I would illustrate the value of the Anti-Catholic Tradition, as existing among the money-making classes of the community, I cannot fix upon a more suitable sample than the statements of this accomplished writer. Accordingly, I refer to his columns; and towards the end of a leading article, in the course of the last month or six weeks, I find the following sentence:—“It is the practice, as our readers are aware, in Roman Catholic countries, for the clergy to post up a list of *all the crimes* to which human frailty can be tempted, placing opposite to them the *exact sum* of money for which their perpetration will be indulged³.” And what makes this statement the more emphatic, is the circumstance, that within two or three sentences afterwards,—ever mindful, as I have said, of the Tables of the Law,—he takes occasion to refer to the divine prohibition, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.”

Such is a specimen of the Tradition, marvellous to say, as it exists among the classes who are well to do in the world. You see, they are so clear on the point, that,

³ June, 1851.

for all their mercantile sense of the value of character, their disgust at false intelligence, their severity with fraud, and their sensitiveness at libel, they have no hesitation in handing down to the next generation this atrocious imputation, that the Catholic Church gives out that she is commissioned by the Moral Governor of the world to bestow on her children permission to perpetrate any sin whatever, for which they have a fancy, on condition of their paying her a price in money for that perpetration, in proportion to the heinousness of the offence.

Now this accusation is not only so grave in itself, but, miserable to say, is so industriously circulated, that, before using it for the purpose for which I have introduced it, in order to remove all suspicion against us, I am induced to go out of my way to enunciate, as briefly and as clearly as I can, what the Catholic Church really does teach upon the subject⁴. The charge in question then rests on a confusion between the *forgiveness of sins* and *admission to Church communion*, two ideas perfectly distinct from each other, both in themselves and in Catholic theology. Every great sin contains in it, as we consider, two separate offences, the offence against God, and the offence against the Church; just as Protestants would allow that murder is at once a sin against God and our neighbour, a sin in the eyes of God, and a crime in the eyes of the law. And, as human society has the arbitrary power of assigning punishments to offences against itself, heavy or light, or of overlooking the offence altogether, or of remitting the penalty when imposed, so has

⁴ The subject of Indulgences does not enter into the charge as contained in the extract from the "Times;" but I purpose to add a word about it at the end of the volume.

the Church. And as the magistrate often inflicts a fine, under sanction of the law, instead of committing to prison, so does the Church allow of the commutation of her own punishments, which are called censures, into alms to the poor, into offerings for some religious object, or even into the mere paying the expenses of the process, that is, the costs of the suit. And as the connivance or free pardon of the magistrate is no pardon in the sight of heaven of the adulterer or the burglar, nor is supposed to be such, so neither does the offender receive, nor is he promised any forgiveness of his sin, either by the Church's taking off the censure, whether in consequence of an almsgiving or otherwise, or by her forbearing, which is the common case, to inflict censure altogether. It is true the Church has the power of forgiving sins also, which I shall speak of directly, but this is by a different instrument, and by a totally different process, as every Catholic knows.

I repeat, the Catholic who perpetrates any serious sin offends his Maker and offends his ecclesiastical society; the injury against his Maker is punished by an *ipso facto* separation from His favour; the injury against his society, when it is visited at all, is visited by excommunication or other spiritual infliction. The successor of St. Peter has the power committed to him of pardoning both offences, the offence against God and the offence against the Church; he is the ultimate source of all jurisdiction whether external or internal, but he commonly restores a man to the visible society of Christians, by an act of his own or of the metropolitan or ordinary, and he reconciles him to God by the agency of the priesthood. Repentance is required on the part of the offender for both restorations; but the *sin* is forgiven and its pu-

nishment remitted in the sacrament of *Penance*; and here, which is the only real pardon, no money is, or ever can be paid. The sacrament cannot be bought; such an act would be a horrible crime; you know this, my brothers, as I know it myself; we witness to each other that such is the received teaching among us. It is utterly false then to assert that it has ever been held in the Catholic Church that "the perpetration of crime could be indulged" for any sum of money. Neither for sins committed, nor sins to come, has money ever been taken as an equivalent, for one no more than for the other. On the other hand, it is quite true that the injury done to the Church, when it has been visited with a censure (which is not a common case), has certainly sometimes been compensated by the performance of some good work, and in the number of such works, almsdeeds and religious offerings are included. I repeat, the Church as little dreams of forgiving the sinner by removing the censure and re-admitting him to public communion, as the magistrate by letting a culprit out of prison.

And in matter of fact, the two acts, the external reconciliation and the inward absolution, are not necessarily connected together. The Church is composed of bad as well as good, according to the Parable, which prophesied that the net should gather of every kind; a man then may be re-admitted to visible fellowship on a general profession of repentance, yet when he proceeds to the Sacrament of Penance may be unable to satisfy the priest that his repentance is sincere, and may fail of absolution. Then he would be in the case, alas! so commonly found in the Church, and ever to be found—viz., allowed to attend mass, to hear sermons, to take part in rites, offices, and processions, and regarded as a

Christian, yet debarred from the use of the Sacraments, from Penance, Holy Eucharist, and Extreme Unction, getting no benefit from Indulgences, meriting nothing for his salvation, but on the contrary being separate from his God, and lying under His wrath, and a dead branch, though he has offered his alms, and is visibly connected with the trunk. On the other hand, it is quite conceivable, that the spiritual reconciliation, that is, the forgiveness of sin, might be bestowed without the external or ecclesiastical restoration. This took place, I think, in the case of the Emperor Napoleon, who, up to the hour of his death, lay under the censures of the Church, and was excommunicate, yet in his last days expressed a desire to be reconciled to God. To the ecclesiastical society perhaps he could not be fully reconciled without sending to Rome; but it is never too late to be saved; he confessed, and was admitted to communion; and if his repentance was true, he departed with an absolute certainty of heaven, though he had not received that external restoration to the visible body to which offerings and alms have sometimes been attached⁵.

However, in spite of the clear and broad distinction I have been laying down, it is the Tradition of Protestantism, immutable and precise, as expressed in the words of its eminent teacher and Doctor I have quoted, that the Catholic Church professes to forgive sins past and to come, on the payment of a price. So it has come down to us, so it will flow on; and the mighty flood of falsehood is continually fed and kept to the full by fresh and

⁵ I think I recollect an *absolutio post mortem*, when La Belle Poule was sent out for his remains. I do not forget the passage in the Council, *Pie admodum, ne hac ipsâ occasione quis pereat, &c.* Sess. 14, de Pœn. c. 7. Vid. Ferrari's *Biblioth. v. Absol. art. i. 55—57.*

fresh testimonies, separate and independent, till scepticism is overcome and opposition is hopeless. And now I am going to give you an account of one of these original authorities as they are considered, who has lately presented himself to the world, in the person of a zealous Protestant clergyman, who once visited Belgium, and on occasion of the late outcry about "Popish Aggression" was moved to give to his brethren the benefit of his ocular witness in behalf of one of the most flagrant abuses and abominations of "that corrupt church."

His account, given at a public meeting, was to the following effect: That in the year 1835, when on a visit to Brussels, he was led to inspect the door of the Cathedral St. Gudule's; and that there he saw fastened up a catalogue of sins, with a specification of the prices at which remission of each might severally be obtained. No circumstance, it would appear, called for his giving this information to the world for the long space of sixteen years; and it is a pity for the Protestant cause that another sixteen did not pass before circumstances suggested his doing so. Why did he not consign it to some safe volume of controversy, weighty enough for England, too heavy for the channel, instead of committing it to the wings of the wind and the mercy of reporters? Then tranquilly and leisurely would the solemn tale have ventured out upon platforms and into pulpits, when contemporaries were gone, and would have taken its place beside my own Don Felix of Andalusia and similar worthies of Exeter Hall. But the fates willed otherwise; the accessory was to join the main stream at once, and to its surprise to be tumbled violently into its bed; the noise drew attention; curiosity was excited; the windings of the infant rill were prematurely tracked to

its source: so we can now put our finger on the first welling of its waters, and we can ascertain the composition of a Protestant tradition.

On the news of this portentous statement getting to Brussels, it excited a commotion which it could not rouse among the Catholics of England. We are familiarized to calumny, and have learned resignation; the good Belgians were surprised and indignant at what they had thought no sane man would have ventured to advance. Forthwith a Declaration was put forth by the persons especially interested in the Cathedral, categorically denying the charge. It is signed by the Dean of Brussels, who is also curé of the Cathedral, by his four assistant clergymen, by the Churchwardens, by the judge of the high court of justice, and two other judges, and by others. They observe that they had privately asked the accuser to withdraw his statement; and on his refusal they make the following terse Declaration:

“The undersigned look upon it as a duty to come forward and protest against the allegations of the” clergyman in question. “They declare, upon their honour, that such a notice as the one spoken of by the said clergyman has never disgraced the entrance, either of the church of St. Gudule, or of any other church of Brussels, or of the whole country. They further declare, that they have never even suspected for one instant that permission to sin could, for any possible motive, be granted, nor that any one could ever obtain remission of his sins for money. Such a doctrine they repudiate with indignation, as it is, and always has been, repudiated by the whole of the Catholic Church.” This Declaration is signed, “Brussels, April 2, 1851.”

One thing alone was wanting to complete the refutation of the slander; and that was, to account how its author was betrayed into so extraordinary a misrepresentation. No one will accuse a respectable person of wilful and deliberate falsehood: did his eyes or his memory deceive him? or did he really see something on the door, which he wrongly translated and interpreted by his prejudices? that the latter is the true explanation of the phenomenon, is probable from a piece of information with which a Brussels journal supplies us. I dare say you know that in cathedrals and large churches abroad chairs are used for worship instead of benches; and they are generally farmed by the beadles or others attached to the church, who let them out to all comers at the price of a small copper coin every time they are used. Now it so happens that on the right-hand door of the transept of this church of St. Gudule there really is affixed a black board, on which there is a catalogue in the French language of the price to be paid, not for sins, but for the use of these chairs. The inscription translated runs as follows: "a chair without cushion, one cent (about a farthing); a chair with cushion, two cents. On great festival days; a chair without cushion, two cents; a chair with cushion, four cents." This board it may be supposed our anti-Catholic witness mistook for that abominable sin-table, the description of which so deservedly shocked the zealous Protestants of Faversham.

Such is the ultimate resolution, as detected in a particular instance, of that uniform and incontestable Protestant Tradition, that we sell sin for money. The exposure happened in March and April; but Protestantism is infallible, and the judgments of its doctors irreversible; accordingly in the following June, the newspaper I have

mentioned thought it necessary to show that the Tradition was not injured by the blow ; so out it came again, "though brayed in a mortar," not at all the worse for the accident, in that emphatic statement which I quoted when I opened the subject, and which I now quote again that I am closing it. "It is the practice," the writer pronounces *ex cathedrâ*, "*as our readers are aware*, in Roman Catholic countries to post up a list of all the crimes to which human frailty can be tempted, placing opposite to them the exact sum of money for which their perpetration will be indulged."

3. Two of my instances are dispatched, and now I come to my third. There is something so tiresome in passing abruptly from one subject to another, that I need your indulgence, my brothers, in making this third beginning ; yet it has been difficult to avoid it, when my very object is to show what extensive subject matters and what different classes of the community are acted on by the Protestant Tradition. Now I am proceeding to the Legislature of the nation, and will give an instance of its operation in a respectable political party.

Its fountain springs up in this case, as it were, under our very feet, and we shall have no difficulty at all in judging of its quality. Its history is as follows :— Coaches, omnibuses, carriages, and cars, day after day drive up and down the Hagley Road ; passengers lounge to and fro on the footpath ; and close alongside of it are discovered one day the nascent foundations and rudiments of a considerable building. On inquiring, it is found to be intended for a Catholic, nay even for a monastic establishment. This leads to a good deal of talk, especially when the bricks begin to show above the sur-

face. Meantime the unsuspecting architect is taking his measurements, and ascertains that the ground is far from lying level; and then, since there is a prejudice among Catholics in favour of horizontal floors, he comes to the conclusion that the bricks of the basement must rise above the surface higher at one end of the building than at the other; in fact, that whether he will or no, there must be some construction of the nature of a vault or cellar at the extremity in question, a circumstance not at all inconvenient, considering it also happens to be the kitchen end of the building. Accordingly, he turns his necessity into a gain, and by the excavation of a few feet of earth he forms a number of chambers convenient for various purposes, partly beneath, partly above the line of the ground. While he is thus intent on his work, gossipers, loungers, alarmists, are busy at theirs too. They go round the building, they peep into the underground brickwork, and are curious about the drains⁶; they moralize about Popery and its spread; at

⁶ It is true, though the gentleman who has brought the matter before the public has accidentally omitted to mention it, that the Protestant feeling has also been excited by the breadth of the drain, which is considered excessive, and moreover *crosses the road*. There exists some nervousness on the subject in the neighbourhood, as I have been seriously given to understand. There is a remarkable passage, too, in his builder's report, which has never been answered or perhaps construed: "One of the compartments was larger than the rest, and *was evidently to be covered in without the building over it.*" This is not the first time a dwelling of mine has been the object of a mysterious interest. When our cottages at Littlemore were in course of preparation, they were visited on horseback and on foot by many of the most distinguished residents of the University of Oxford. Heads of houses and canons did not scruple to investigate the building within and without, and some of them went so far as to inspect and theorize upon the most retired portions of the premises. Perhaps some thirty years hence, in some "History of my own times" speculations may be found on the subject, in aid of the Protestant Tradition.

length they trespass upon the inclosure, they dive into the half-finished shell, and they take their fill of seeing what is to be seen, and imagining what is not. Every house is built on an idea; you do not build a mansion like a public office, or a palace like a prison, or a factory like a shooting box, or a church like a barn. Religious houses in like manner have their own idea; they have certain indispensable peculiarities of form and internal arrangement. Doubtless there was much in the very idea of an Oratory perplexing to the Protestant intellect, and inconsistent with Protestant notions of comfort and utility. Why should so large a room be here? why so small a room there? why a passage so long and wide, and why so long a wall without a window? the very size of the house needed explanation. Judgments, which had employed themselves on the high subject of a Catholic hierarchy and its need, found no difficulty in dogmatising on bed-rooms and closets. There was much to suggest matter of suspicion, and to predispose the trespasser to doubt, whether he had yet got to the bottom of the subject. At length one question flashed upon his mind; what can such a house have to do with cellars? cellars and monks, what can be their mutual relation? monks, to what possible use can they put pits, and holes, and corners, and outhouses, and sheds? A sensation was created; it brought other visitors; it spread; it became an impression, a belief; the truth lay bare; a tradition was born; a fact was elicited which thenceforth had many witnesses. *Those cellars were cells.* How obvious when once stated! and every one who entered the building, every one who passed by, became, I say, in some sort, ocular vouchers for what had often been read of in books, but for many

generations had happily been unknown to England, for the incarcerations, the torturings, the starvings, the immurings, the murderings proper to a monastic establishment.

Now I am tempted to stop for a while, in order to *improve* (as the evangelical pulpits call it) this most memorable discovery. I will therefore briefly consider it under the heads of, 1. THE ACCUSATION; 2. ITS GROUNDS; 3. THE ACCUSERS; and, 4. the ACCUSED.

First, THE ACCUSATION; it is this,—that the Catholics, building the house in question, were in the practice of committing *murder*. This was so strictly the charge, that, had the platform selected for making it been other than it is said to have been, I suppose the speaker might have been indicted for libel. His words were these: “It was not usual for a coroner to hold an *inquest*, unless where a rumour had got abroad that there was a *necessity* for one; and how was a rumour to come *from the underground cells of the convents*? Yes, he repeated, underground cells: and he would tell them something about such places. At this moment, in the parish of Edgbaston, within the borough of Birmingham, there was a large convent, of some kind or other, being erected, and the whole of the underground was fitted up with cells; *and what were those cells for?*”

Secondly.—THE GROUNDS OF THE ACCUSATION.—They are simple; behold them, 1. that the house is built level; 2. that the plot of earth on which it is built is higher at one end than at the other.

Thirdly.—THE ACCUSERS.—This, too, throws light upon the character of Protestant traditions. Not weak and ignorant people only, not people at a distance,—but

educated men, gentlemen well connected, high in position, men of business, men of character, members of the legislature, men familiar with the locality, men who know the accused by name,—such are the men who deliberately, reiteratedly, in spite of being set right, charge certain persons with pitiless, savage practices; with beating and imprisoning, with starving, with murdering their dependents.

Fourthly.—THE ACCUSED.—I feel ashamed, my brothers, of bringing my own matters before you, when far better persons have suffered worse imputations; but bear with me. I then am the accused. A gentleman of blameless character, a county member, with whose near relatives I have been on terms of almost fraternal intimacy for a quarter of a century, who knows me by repute far more familiarly (I suppose) than any one in this room, putting aside my personal friends; he it is who charges me, and others like me, with delighting in blood, with enjoying the shrieks and groans of agony and despair, with presiding at a banquet of dislocated limbs, quivering muscles, and wild countenances. O, what a world is this! Could he look into our eyes and say it? Would he have the heart to say it, if he recollected of whom he said it? For who are we? Have we lived in a corner? have we come to light suddenly out of the earth? We have been nourished, for the greater part of our lives, in the bosom of the great schools and universities of Protestant England; we have been the foster sons of the Edwards and Henries, the Wykehams and Wolseys, of whom Englishmen are wont to make much; we have grown up amid hundreds of contemporaries, scattered at present all over the country, in those special ranks of society which are the very walk of a member of the

legislature. Our names are better known to the educated classes of the country than those of any others who are not public men. Moreover, if there be men in the whole world who may be said to live *in publico*, it is the members of a College at one of our Universities; living, not in private houses, not in families, but in one or two apartments which are open to all the world, at all hours, with nothing, I may say, their own; with college servants, a common table,—nay, their chairs and their bedding, and their cups and saucers, down to their coal-scuttle and their carpet brooms,—a sort of common property, and the right of their neighbours. Such is that manner of life, in which nothing, I may say, can be hid; where no trait of character or peculiarity of conduct but comes to broad day,—such is the life I myself led for above a quarter of a century, under the eyes of numbers who are familiarly known to my accusers; such is the life which we all have led ever since we have been in Birmingham, with our house open to all comers, and ourselves accessible, I may almost say, at any hour; and this being so, considering the *charge*, and the *evidence*, and the *accuser*, and the *accused*, could we Catholics desire a more apposite illustration of the formation and the value of a Protestant Tradition?

I set it down for the benefit of time to come; “though for no other cause,” as a great author says, “yet for this: that posterity may know we have not loosely, through silence, permitted things to pass away as in a dream, there shall be for men’s information extant thus much.” One commonly forgets such things, from the trouble and inconvenience of having to remember them; let one specimen last, of many which have been suffered to perish, of the birth of an Anti-Catholic tradition. The nascent fable

has indeed failed, as the tale about the Belgian sin-table, but it might have thriven : it has been lost by bad nursing : it ought to have been cherished awhile in those underground receptacles, where first it drew breath, till it could comfortably bear the light ; till its limbs were grown, and its voice was strong, and we on whom it bore had run our course, and gone to our account ; and then it might have raised its head without fear and without reproach, and might have magisterially asserted what there was none to deny. But men are all the creatures of circumstances ; they are hurried on to a ruin which they may see but cannot evade : so has it been with the Edgbaston Tradition. It was spoken on the house-tops when it should have been whispered in closets, and it expired in the effort. Yet it might have been allotted, let us never forget, a happier destiny. It might have smouldered and spread through a portion of our Birmingham population ; it might have rested obscurely on their memories, and now and then risen upon their tongues : there might have been flitting notions, misgivings, rumours, voices, that the horrors of the Inquisition were from time to time renewed in our subterranean chambers : and fifty years hence, if some sudden frenzy of the hour roused the Anti-Catholic jealousy still lingering in the place, a mob might have swarmed about our innocent dwelling, to rescue certain legs of mutton and pats of butter from imprisonment, and to hold an inquest over a dozen packing-cases, some old hampers, a knife board, and a range of empty blacking bottles.

Thus I close my third instance of the sort of evidence commonly adducible for the great Protestant Tradition ; not the least significant circumstance about them all being this, that, though in the case of all three that evidence is

disproved, yet in not one of the three is the charge founded on it withdrawn. In spite of Dr. Waddington, Dr. Maitland, and Mr. Rose, the editors of Mosheim still print and publish his slander on St. Eligius ; in defiance of the Brussels protest, and the chair tariff of St. Gudule, the Kent clergyman and the "Times" still bravely maintain our traffic in sins ; in violence to the common sense of mankind, the rack and the pulley are still affirmed to be busy in the dungeons of Edgbaston ;—for Protestantism is the religion of Englishmen, and part and parcel of the law of the land.

And now, in conclusion, I will but state my conviction, which I am sure to have confirmed by every intelligent person who takes the trouble to examine the subject, that such slanders as I have instanced are the real foundation on which the Anti-Catholic feeling mainly rests in England, and without which it could not long be maintained. Doubtless there are arguments of a different calibre, whatever their worth, which weigh against Catholics with half-a-dozen members of a University, with the speculative church-restorer, with the dilettante divine, with the fastidious scholar, and with some others of a higher character of mind ; whether St. Justin Martyr said this or that ; whether images should be dressed in muslin, or hewed out of stone ; what criticism makes of a passage in the prophets,—questions such as these, and others of a more serious cast, may be conclusive for or against the Church in the study or in the lecture-room, but they have no influence with the many. As to those charges which do weigh with the people at large, the more they can be examined, the more, I am convinced, will they be found to be untrue. It is by

wholesale, retail, systematic, unscrupulous lying, for I can use no gentler terms, that the many rivulets are made to flow for the feeding the great Protestant Tradition,—the Tradition of the Court, the Tradition of the Law, the Tradition of the Legislature, the Tradition of the Establishment, the Tradition of Literature, the Tradition of Domestic Circles, the Tradition of the Populace.

17

LECTURES

ON THE

PRESENT POSITION OF CATHOLICS

IN ENGLAND:

ADDRESSED TO THE BROTHERS OF THE ORATORY.

BY

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LECTURE IV.

TRUE TESTIMONY UNEQUAL TO THE PROTESTANT VIEW.

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LECTURE IV.

TRUE TESTIMONY UNEQUAL TO THE PROTESTANT VIEW.

I CAN fancy, my Brothers, that some of you may have been startled at a statement I made at the close of my Lecture of Last Week. I then said, that the more fully the imputations which were cast upon us were examined, the more unfounded they would turn out to be; so that the great Tradition on which we are persecuted is little short of one vast pretence or fiction. On this you may be led to ask me whether I mean to deny all and every thing which can be advanced to the disadvantage of the Catholic Church, and whether I recommend you to do the same? but this was not my meaning. Some things which are alleged against us are doubtless true, and we see no harm in them, though Protestants do; other things are true, yet, as we think, only go to form ingenious objections; others again are true, and refer to what is really sinful and detestable, as we allow as fully as Protestants can urge: but all these real facts, whatever their worth, taken all together, do

not go any way towards proving the Protestant Traditional View of us ; they are vague and unsatisfactory, and, to apply a common phrase, they beat about the bush. If you would have some direct downright proof that Catholicism is what Protestants make it to be, something which will come up to the mark, you must lie ; else you will not get beyond feeble suspicions, which may be right, but may be wrong. Hence Protestants are obliged to cut their ninth commandment out of their Decalogue. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour" must go, must disappear ; their position requires the sacrifice. The substance, the force, the edge of their Tradition is slander. As soon as ever they disabuse their minds of what is false, and grasp only what is true,—I do not say they at once become Catholics ; I do not say they lose their dislike to our religion, or their suspicion of its working ;—but I say this, either they become tolerant towards us, and cease to hate us personally,—or, at least, supposing they cannot shake off old associations, and are prejudiced and hostile as before, still they find they cannot communicate their own feelings to others. To Protestantism False Witness is the principle of propagation. There are indeed able men who can make a striking case out of any thing or nothing, as great painters give a meaning and a unity to the commonest bush, and pond, and paling, and stile : genius can do without facts as well as create them ; but few possess the gift. Taking things as they are, and judging of them by the long run, one may securely say, that the Anti-Catholic Tradition could not be kept alive, would die of exhaustion, without a continual supply of fable.

I repeat, not every thing which is said to our dis-

advantage is without foundation in fact ; but it is not the true that tells against us, but the false. The Tradition requires bold painting ; its prominent outline, its glaring colouring, needs to be a fraud. So was it at the time of the Reformation : the multitude would never have been converted by exact reasoning and facts which could be proved ; so its upholders were clever enough to call the Pope Antichrist, and they let the startling accusation sink into men's minds. Nothing else would have succeeded ; and they pursue the same *tactique* now. Nothing else, I say, would have gained for them the battle ; else, why should they have adopted it ? Few persons tell atrocious falsehoods for the sake of telling them. If truth had been sufficient to put down Catholicism, the Reformers would not have had recourse to fiction. Errors indeed creep in by chance, whatever be the point of inquiry or dispute ; but I am not accusing Protestants merely of incidental or of attendant error, but I mean that falsehood is the very staple of the views which they have been taught to entertain of us.

I allow, there are true charges which can be brought against us ; certainly, not only do I not deny it, but I hardly could deny it without heresy. I say distinctly, did I take upon me to deny every thing which could be said against us, I should be proving too much, I should startle the Catholic theologian as well as Protestants ; for what would it be but implying, that the Church contains none within her pale but the just and holy ? This was the heresy of the Novatians and Donatists of old time ; it was the heresy of our Lollards, and others, such as Luther, who maintained that bad men are not members of the Church, that none but the predestinate are her members. But this no Catholic asserts, every

Catholic denies. Every Catholic has ever denied it, up to the very time of the Apostles and their Divine Master; and He and they deny it; Christ denies it, St. Paul denies it, the Catholic Church denies it. Our Lord expressly said that the Church was to be like a net, which gathered of every kind, not only of the good, but of the bad too. Such was *His* Church; it does not prove then that we are *not* His Church, because we are *like* His Church; rather, our being *like* the Primitive Church, is a reason for concluding that we are *one* with it. We cannot make His Church better than He made her; we must be content with her, as He made her, or not pretend to follow Him. He said, "Many are called, few are chosen;" they come, but they fall away. They are not indeed sinning at the very time when they are brought into His family, at the time they are new born; but, as children grow up, and converts live on, the time too frequently comes, when they fall under the power of one kind of temptation or other, and fall away, either for a while, or for good. Thus, not indeed by the divine wish and intention, but by the divine permission, and man's perverseness, there is a vast load of moral evil existing in the Church; an enemy has sown weeds there, and those weeds remain among the wheat till the harvest. And this evil in the Church is not found only in the laity, but among the clergy too; there have been bad priests, bad bishops, bad monks, bad nuns, and bad Popes. If this then is the charge made against us, that we do not all live up to our calling, but that Catholics, lay and clerical, may, if so be, be proved worldly, revengeful, licentious, slothful, cruel, nay, may be unbelievers, we grant it at once. We not only grant it, but we zealously maintain it. "In a great house," says St.

Paul, "there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some indeed unto honour, but some unto dishonour." There are, alas, plenty of children of the Church, who by their bad lives insult and disgrace their Mother.

The Church, it is true, has been promised many great things, but she has not been promised the souls of all her children. She is promised truth in religious teaching, she is promised duration to the end of the world; she is made the means of grace, she is unchangeable in Creed and in structure; she will ever cover the earth;—but her children are not infallible separately, any more than they are immortal; not indefectible, any more than they are in many places at once. Therefore, if Protestants would form arguments which really would tell against us, they must show, not that individuals are immoral or profane, but that the Church teaches, or enjoins, or recommends, what is immoral or profane; rewards, encourages, or at least does not warn and discountenance the sinner; or promulgates rules, and enforces practices which directly lead to sin; and this indeed they try to do, but they find the task not near so pleasant as the short and easy method of strong round thoroughgoing statements, which are not true.

We do not then feel as a difficulty, on the contrary, we teach as a doctrine, that there are scandals in the Church. "It must needs be, that scandals come; nevertheless, woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh." There are, to all appearance, multitudes of Catholics who have passed out of the world unrepentant, and are lost; there are multitudes living in sin, and out of grace; priests may and do fall, in this or that country, at this or that time, though they are exceptions

to the rule ; or there may be parties or knots of ecclesiastics, who take a low view of their duty, or adopt dangerous doctrines ; or they may be covetous, or unfeeling, as other men, and use their power tyrannically, or for selfish, secular ends. There may be a declension and deterioration of the priesthood of a whole country. There may be secret unbelievers, both among clergy and laity ; or those who are tending in their imaginations and their reasonings to grievous error or heresy. There may be great disorders in some particular monastery or nunnery ; or a love of ease and slothful habits ; and a mere formality in devotion, in particular orders of Religious, at particular seasons. There may be self-indulgence, pride, ambition, political profligacy in certain Bishops in particular states of society, as, for instance, when the Church has been long established and abounds in wealth. And there have been Popes before now, who to the letter have fulfilled the awful description of the unfaithful servant and steward, who began "to strike the men servants and maid servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk." All this may be granted, but before the admission can avail as an argument against the Catholic Church, one thing has to be examined, whether on the whole her influence and her action is on the side of what is wrong, or rather (as is the case) simply powerful on the side of good ; one thing has to be proved, that the scandals within her pale have been caused by her principles, her teaching, her injunctions, or, which pretty nearly comes to the same thing, that they do not exist, and as grievously, (Catholics would say, they exist far more grievously) external to her.

Now here is the flaw in the argument. For instance, it is plausibly objected that disorders not only sometimes

do, but must, occur, where Priests are bound to celibacy. Even the candid Protestant will be apt to urge against us, " You must not argue from the case of the few, from persons of high principle and high education ; but taking the run of men, you must allow that the vow will not be kept by numbers of those who have got themselves to take it." Now, I will not reply, as I well might do, by pointing out the caution which the Church observes in the selection of her priests ; how it is her rule to train them carefully for many years beforehand, with this one thought in view, that priests they are to be ; how she tries them during their training ; how she takes one and rejects another, not with any reflection on those who are rejected, but simply because she finds they are not called to this particular state of life ; how, when she has selected a man, a hundred provisions and checks in detail are thrown around his person, which are to be his safeguard in his arduous calling ; lastly, how, when he is once called to his high ministry, he has, unless he be wonderfully wanting to himself, the power of divine grace abundantly poured upon him, without which all human means are useless, but which can do, and constantly does, miracles, as the experience, not of priest merely, but of every one who has been converted from a life of sin will abundantly testify :—I might enlarge on considerations such as these, but I put them aside, because I wish to address myself to the question of fact.

When, then, we come to the matter of fact, whether celibacy *has been* and *is*, in comparison of the marriage vow, so dangerous to a clerical body, I answer that I am very sceptical indeed that in matter of fact a married clergy *is* adorned, in any special and singular way, with the grace of purity ; and this is just the very thing

which Protestants take for granted. What is the use of speaking against our discipline, till they have proved their own to be better? Now I deny that they succeed with their rule of matrimony, better than we do with our rule of celibacy; and I deny it on no private grounds, or secret means of information, or knowledge of past years. I have lived in one place all my days, and know very few married clergymen, and those of such excellence and consistency of life, that I should feel it to be as absurd to suspect them of any the slightest impropriety in their conduct, as to suspect the Catholic priests with whom I am well acquainted; and this is saying a great deal. When I speak of a married ministry, I speak of it, not from any knowledge I possess, more than another; but I must avow that the public prints and the conversation of the world, by many shocking instances, which of course are only specimens of many others, heavier or lighter, which do not come before the world, bring home to me the fact. that a Protestant rector or a dissenting preacher is not necessarily kept from the sins I am speaking of, because he happens to be married: and when he offends, whether in a grave way or less seriously, still in all cases he has by matrimony but exchanged a bad sin for a worse, and has become an adulterer instead of being a seducer. Matrimony only does this for him, that his purity is less protected and less suspected. I am very sceptical then of the perfect correctness of Protestant ministers, whether in the Establishment or in Dissent. I repeat, I know perfectly well, that there are a great number of high-minded men among the Anglican clergy who would as lief think of murder, as of trespassing by the faintest act of indecorum upon the reverence which is due from them to others; nor am I denying, what, though of

course I cannot deny it on any knowledge of mine, yet I wish to deny with all my heart, that the majority of Wesleyan and dissenting ministers lead lives beyond all reproach; but still, allowing all this, the terrible instances of human frailty, of which one reads and hears in Protestant bodies, are quite enough to show that the married state is no sort of warrant for moral correctness, no preventive, whether of scandalous offences, or much less of minor forms of the same general sin. Purity is not a virtue which comes as a matter of course to the married any more than to the single, though of course there is great difference between man and man; and though it is impossible to bring the matter fairly to an issue, yet for that very reason I have as much a right to my opinion as another to his, when I state my deliberate conviction that there are, to say the least, as many offences against the marriage vow among Protestant ministers, as there are against the vow of celibacy among Catholic Priests. I may go very much further than this in my own view of the matter, and think, as I do, that the Priest's vow is generally the occasion of virtues which a married clergy does not contemplate even in idea; but I am on the defensive, and only insist on so much as is necessary for my purpose.

But if matrimony does not prevent cases of immorality among Protestant ministers, it is not celibacy which causes them among Catholic Priests. It is not what the Catholic Church imposes, but what human nature prompts, which leads any portion of her ecclesiastics into sin. Human nature will break out, like some wild and raging element, under any system; it bursts out under the Protestant system; it bursts out under the Catholic; passion will carry away the married clergyman as well as

the unmarried Priest. On the other hand, there are numbers to whom there would be, not greater, but less, trial in the vow of celibacy, than in the vow of marriage¹.

Till, then, you can prove that celibacy causes what matrimony certainly does not prevent, you do nothing at all. This is the language of common sense. It is the world, the flesh, and the devil, not celibacy which is the ruin of those who fall. Slothful priests ! why, where was any religion whatever, established and endowed, in which Bishops, Canons, and wealthy rectors were not exposed to the temptation of pride and sensuality ? The wealth is in fault, not the rules of the Church. Preachers have denounced the evil and ecclesiastical authorities have repressed it, far more vigorously within the Catholic pale, than in the English Establishment, or the Wesleyan connexion. Covetous priests ! shame on them ! but has covetousness been more rife in Cardinals or Abbots, than in the Protestant Bench, English or Irish ? Party spirit, and political faction ! has not party, religious and political, burnt as fiercely in High-church Rectors and radical preachers, as in Catholic ecclesiastics ? And so again, to take an extreme case,—be there infidels among the multitudes of the Catholic clergy : yet among the Anglican are there really none, are there few, who disbelieve their own Baptismal service, repudiate their own Absolution of the sick, and condemn the very form of words under which they themselves were ordained ? Again, are there not numbers who doubt about every part of their system, about their Church, its authority, its truth, its articles, its creeds ; deny its Protestantism, yet without being sure of its Catholicity, and therefore never dare

¹ As so many persons prefer Tetotalism to the Temperance principle.

commit themselves to a plain assertion, as not knowing whither it will carry them? Once more, are there not in the Establishment those, who hold that all systems of doctrine whatever are founded in a mistake, and who deny or are fast denying that there is any revealed truth in the world at all? Yet none of these parties, whatever they doubt, or deny, or disbelieve, see their way to leave the position in which they find themselves at present, or to sacrifice their wealth or credit to their opinions. Why then do you throw in my teeth that Wolsey was proud, or Ximenes cruel, or Bonner trimming, or this Abbot sensual, or that convent in disorder; that this priest should never have been a priest, and that nun was forced into religion by her father, as if there were none of these evils in Protestant England, as if there were no pride in the House of Lords now, no time-serving in the House of Commons, no servility in fashionable preachers, no selfishness in the old, no profligacy in the young, no tyranny or cajolery in match-making, no cruelty in Union workhouses, no immorality in factories? If grievous sin is found in holy places, the Church cannot hinder it, while man is man: prove that she encourages it, prove that she does not repress it, prove that her action, be it greater or less, is not, as far as it goes, beneficial;—then and not till then will you have established a point against her.

For myself, my Brothers of the Oratory, I never should have been surprised, if in the course of the last nine months of persecution, some scandal in this or that part of our English Church, had been brought to light and circulated through the country to our great prejudice. Not that I speak from any knowledge or suspicion of my own, but merely judging antecedently and

on the chance of things. And, had such a case in fact been producible, it would, in the judgment of dispassionate minds, have gone for nothing at all, unless there is to be no covetous Judas, no heretical Nicolas, no ambitious Diotrophes, no world-loving Demas in the Church of these latter days. Fraud in a priest, disorder in a convent, would have proved just as much and just as little against Catholicism, as corruption in Parliament, peculation in the public offices, or bribery at elections tells against the British Constitution. Providentially no such calamity has occurred ; but oh, what would not our enemies have paid for only one real and live sin in holy places to mock us withal ! Oh, light to the eyes and joy to the heart, and music to the ear ! Oh, sweet tidings to writers of pamphlets, newspapers, and magazines ; to preachers and declaimers, who have now a weary while been longing, and panting, and praying for some good fat scandal, one, only just one, well-supported instance of tyranny, or barbarity, or fraud, or immorality, to batten upon and revel in ! What price would have been too much for so dear a fact, as that one of our Bishops or one of our religious houses had been guilty of some covetous aim, or some unworthy manceuvre ! Their fierce and unblushing effort to fix such charges where they were impossible, shows how many eyes were fastened on us all over the country, and how deep and fervent was the aspiration that at least some among us might turn out to be a brute or a villain. To and fro the Spirit of false witness sped. She dropped upon the floor of the Parliament House in the form of a gentleman of Warkwickshire, and told how a nun had escaped thereabouts from a convent window, which in consequence had ever since been crossed with iron bars : but it

turned out that the window had been attempted by thieves, and the bars had been put up to protect the Blessed Sacrament from them. Then she flitted to Nottingham, and in the guise of a town newspaper's correspondent, repeated the tale with the concordant witness, as she gave out, of a whole neighbourhood, who had seen the poor captive atop of the wall, and then wandering about the fields like a mad thing: but the Editor in London discovered the untruth, and unsaid in his own paper the slander he had incautiously admitted. Next she forced her way into a Nunnery near London, and she assured the Protestant world that then and there an infant had suddenly appeared among the sisterhood; but the two newspapers who were the organs of her malice, had to retract the calumny in open court, and to ask pardon to escape a prosecution.

Tales, I say, such as these showed the *animus* of the fabricators: but what, after all, would they have really gained, had their imputations been ever so true? Though one bad priest be found here or there, or one convent be in disorder, or there be this or that abuse of spiritual power, or a school of ecclesiastics give birth to a heresy, or a diocese be neglected, nay, though a whole hierarchy be in declension or decay, this would not suffice for the argument of Protestantism. And Protestantism itself plainly confesses it. Yes, the Protestant tradition must be fed with facts more wholesale, more stimulating, than any I have enumerated, if it is to keep its hold on the multitude. Isolated instances of crime, or widespread tepidity, or imperfections in administration, or antiquated legislation, such imputations are but milk-and-water ingredients in a theme so thrilling as that of

Holy Church being a sorceress and the child of perdition. Facts that are possible, and that sometimes occur, do but irritate, by suggesting suspicions which they are not sufficient to substantiate. Falsehood, that is decent and respectable, is unequal to the occasion. Mosheim and Robertson, Jortin and White, raise hopes to disappoint them. The popular demand is for the prodigious, the enormous, the abominable, the diabolical, the impossible. It must be shown that all priests are monsters of hypocrisy, that all nunneries are dens of infamy, that all Bishops are the embodied plenitude of savageness and perfidy. We must have a cornucopia of mummary, blasphemy, and licentiousness ; of knives, and ropes, and faggots, and fetters, and pulleys, and racks, if the great Protestant Tradition is to be kept alive in the hearts of the population. The great point in view is to burn into their imagination, by a keen and peremptory process, a sentiment of undying hostility to Catholicism ; and nothing will suffice for this enterprise but imposture, in its purest derivation, from him whom Scripture emphatically calls the father of lies, and whose ordinary names, when translated, are the accuser and the slanderer.

This I shall prove as well as assert ; and I shall do so in the following way. You know, my Brothers of the Oratory, that from time to time persons come before the Protestant public, with pretensions of all others the most favourable for proving its charges against us, as having once belonged to our Communion, and having left it from conviction. If these Protestants would know what the persons really are like whom they are reprobating, if they would determine our internal state, and build their argument on a true foundation, and accommodate their

judgment of us to facts, here is the best of opportunities for their purpose. The single point to ascertain is the trustworthiness of the informants: that being attained, the testimony they give is definitive; but if it is disproved, the evidence is worthless.

Now I am going to mention to you the names of two persons, utterly unlike each other in all things except in their both coming forward as converts from Catholicism; both putting on paper their personal experience of the religion they had left; both addressing themselves especially to the exposure of the rule of celibacy, whether in the priesthood or in convents; and moreover, both on their first appearance having met with great encouragement from Protestants, and obtained an extensive patronage for the statements they respectively put forward. One was a man, the other a woman; the one a gentleman, a person of very superior education and great abilities, who lived among us, and might be interrogated and cross-examined at any time: the woman, on the other hand, had no education, no character, no principle, and, as the event made manifest, deserved no credit whatever. Whatever the one said was true, as often as he spoke to facts he had witnessed, and was not putting out opinions or generalizing on evidence; whatever the other said was, or was likely to be, false. Thus the two were contrasted: yet the truth spoken against us by the man of character is forgotten, and the falsehood spoken against us by the unworthy woman, lives. If this can be shown, do you need a clearer proof, that falsehood, not truth, is the essence of the Protestant Tradition?

The Rev. Joseph Blanco White, who is one of the two persons I speak of, was a man of great talent, various

erudition, and many most attractive points of character. Twenty-five years ago, when he was about my present age, I became acquainted with him at Oxford, and I lived for some years on terms of familiarity with him. I admired him for the simplicity and openness of his character, the warmth of his affections, the range of his information, his power of conversation, and an intellect refined, elegant, and accomplished. I loved him from witnessing the constant sufferings, bodily and mental, of which he was the prey, and for his expatriation on account of his religion. At that time, not having the slightest doubt that Catholicism was an error, I found in his relinquishment of great ecclesiastical preferment in his native country for the sake of principle, a claim on my admiration and sympathy. He was certainly most bitter-minded and prejudiced against every thing in and connected with the Catholic Church; it was nearly the only subject on which he could not brook opposition: but this did not interfere with the confidence I placed in his honour and truth; for, though he might give expression to a host of opinions in which it was impossible to acquiesce, and was most precipitate and unfair in his inferences and inductions, and might be credulous of facts on the authority of others, yet, as to his personal testimony, viewed as distinct from his judgments and suspicions, it never for an instant came into my mind to doubt it. He had become an infidel before he left Spain. While at Oxford he was a believer in Christianity: after leaving it he fell into infidelity again; and he died, I may say, without any fixed belief at all, either in a God or in the soul's immortality.

About the period of my acquaintance with him, he

wrote various works against the Catholic Church, which in a great measure are repetitions of each other, throwing the same mass of testimonies, such as they are, into different shapes, according to the occasion. And since his death, many years after, his Life has been published, repeating what is substantially the same evidence. Among these publications one was written for the lower classes ; it was entitled, "The Poor Man's Preservative against Popery ;" and, if I mistake not, was put upon the Catalogue of Books and Tracts of the great Church of England Society, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. No work could be sent into the world with greater advantages ; published under the patronage of all the dignitaries of the Establishment, put into the hands of the whole body of the Clergy for distribution, at a low price, written in an animated style, addressed to the traditionary hatred of the Catholic Church existing among us, which is an introduction to any book, whatever its intrinsic value ; and laden with a freight of accusations against her, which, as far as their matter was concerned, and the writer's testimony extended, were true as well as grave.

When I began collecting materials for this Lecture, not being able to lay my hand upon the publication at home, I sent for a copy to the Christian Knowledge depôt in this town, and, to my surprise, I was told it was no longer in print. I repeated the application to the Society's office in London, and received the same reply. Now certainly there are reasons why a Society connected with the National Church should wish to withdraw the work of a writer, who ended, not only with hating the Papacy, but with despising the Establishment ; yet, considering his facts were so trustworthy, and his evi-

dence so important, the Society hardly would have withdrawn it, if there had been any good reason for continuing it in print. Such a reason certainly *would* have been its popularity; I cannot conceive how persons, with the strong feelings against the Catholic religion entertained by the members of that Society, having given their solemn approbation, not only to the principle of a certain attack upon it, but to the attack itself; and being confident that the facts related are true, could allow themselves in conscience to withdraw it, on account of subsequent religious changes in the writer, supposing it actually to enjoy a sufficient popularity, and to be doing good service against Catholicism; and therefore I conclude, since it *was* withdrawn, that, in spite of the forced circulation which the Society gave it, it had *not* made any great impression on the mass of men, or even interested the Established Clergy in its favour. But any how, it never was known, in matter of fact, as far as I can make out, to the population at large, for instance, to the masses of a town such as this, whatever consideration it may have enjoyed in the circles of the Establishment. Here then is a solemn testimony delivered against Catholics, of which the basis of facts is true, which nevertheless has no popularity to show, is sustained at first by a forced sale, and then is abandoned by its very patrons: and now let us consider the character of the facts of which it consists.

They are such as the writer himself was very far from thinking a light imputation on the Church he had abandoned. He considered he had inflicted on Catholicism a most formidable blow, in giving his simple evidence against it; and it must be allowed that some of his facts are of a very grave nature. He was the partner and the

witness of a most melancholy phenomenon. About a hundred and fifty years ago a school of infidelity arose in Protestant England; the infamous Voltaire came over here from France, and on his return took back with him its arguments, and propagated them among his own countrymen. The evil spread; at length it attacked the French Catholic Clergy, and during the last century there was a portion of them, I do not say a large portion, but an influential, who fraternised with the infidel, still holding their places and preferments in the Church. At the end of the century, about the time of the first sanguinary French Revolution, the pestilence spread into Spain; a knot of the Spanish Clergy became infidels, and, as a consequence, abandoned themselves to a licentious life. Blanco White was one of these, and, amid the political troubles in his country during the first years of this century, he managed to escape to England, where he died in the year 1841.

Now there was one circumstance which gave a particularly shocking character to the infidelity of these Spanish ecclesiastics, while it made it more intense. In France the infidel party was not afraid to profess itself infidel; and such members of the clerical body as were abandoned enough to join it, did so openly; frequented its brilliant meetings, and lived shamelessly, like men of fashion and votaries of sin. It was otherwise in Spain; the people would not have borne this; public opinion was all on the side of the Catholic religion; such as doubted or disbelieved were obliged to keep it to themselves, and thus, if they were ecclesiastics, to become the most awful of hypocrites. There *can* be hypocrites in the Church, as there may be hypocrites in any religion; but here you see *what* a hypocrite is in the Catho-

lic Church, as seen in fact; not a person who takes up a religious profession, in order to gratify some bad end, but, for the most part, one who has learned to disbelieve what he professes, after he has begun to profess it². However, such a person is, on any explanation, an object of horror; and in Spain it was increased by the impatience, irritation, and fever of mind, which the constraint they lay under occasioned to these unhappy men. Their feelings, shut up within their breasts, became fierce and sullen; oppressed by the weight of the popular sentiment, they turned round in revenge upon its object, and they hated Catholicism the more, because their countrymen were Catholics³. They became a sort of secret society, spoke to each other only in secret places, held intercourse by signs, and plunged into licentiousness, even as a relief to the miserable conflicts which raged within them.

Earth could not show, imagination could not picture, Satan could not create, a more horrible spectacle. You will say, how was it possible? how could men, who had, I will not merely say, given themselves to God, but who had tasted the joys and the rewards of such devotion, how could they have the heart thus to change? Why, the perpetrators of the most heinous crimes, men who have sold themselves to the world, and have gained their full price from it, even they look back with tears to

² *E.g.* Mr. Blanco White says of one of the Spanish Ecclesiastics whom he introduces, "He was . . . one of those, who, having *originally* taken their posts in the foremost ranks of asceticism, *with the most sincere desire of improvement for himself and others*, are afterwards involved in guilt by strong temptation, and reduced to secret moral degradation, *by want of courage to throw off the mask of sanctity.*" Life, vol. i. p. 121.

³ I think I have heard him say that he had lost the knowledge of the Spanish tongue, not having the heart to keep it up.

those days of innocence and peace, which once were theirs, and which are irrecoverably gone. Napoleon said that the day of his first communion was the happiest day of his life. Such men actually part company with the very presence of religion, go forward their own way, and leave it in the distance. Their regret is directed to what, not merely is past, but is away. But these priests were in the very bosom of the Church; they served her altars, they were in the centre of her blessings; how could they forget Jerusalem who dwelt within her? how could they be so thankless towards her sweetness and her brightness, and so cruel towards themselves? how could one who had realized that the Strong and Mighty, and the Gracious, was present on the Altar, who had worshipped there that Saviour's tender Heart, and rejoiced in the assurance of His love, how could he go on year after year (horrible!), performing the same rites, holding his Lord in his hands, dispensing Him to His people, yet thinking it all an idle empty show, a vain superstition, a detestable idolatry, a blasphemous fraud, and cursing the while the necessity which compelled his taking part in it? Why, in the case of one, who ever had known the power of religion, it is incomprehensible; but, as regards the melancholy instance we are contemplating, it would really seem, if you may take his own recollection of his early self in evidence of the fact, that he never had discovered what religion was. Most children are open to religious feelings, Catholic children of course more than others; some, indeed, might complain, that, as they advance to boyhood, religion becomes irksome and wearisome to them, but I doubt whether this is true of Catholic youth, till they begin to sin. True, alas, it is, that the nearer and more urgent excitement

of guilty thoughts, does render the satisfactions and consolations of Paradise insipid and uninviting; but even then their reason tells them that the fault is with themselves, not with religion; and that after all heaven is not only better, but pleasanter, sweeter, more glorious, more satisfying than any thing on earth. Yet, from some strange, mysterious cause, this common law was not fulfilled in this hapless Spanish boy; he never found comfort in religion, not in childhood, more than in manhood, or in old age. In his very first years, as in his last, it was a yoke and nothing more; a task without a recompense.

Thus he tells us, he "entertains a most painful recollection" of the "perpetual round of devotional practices" in which he was compelled to live. He "absolutely dreaded the approach of Sunday. Early on the morning of that formidable day, when he was only eight years old, he was made to go with his father to the Dominican convent⁴," always for mass, and every other week for confession. He did not get his breakfast for two hours, then he had to stand or kneel in the Cathedral, I suppose at High Mass, for two hours longer. Well, the second two hours probably was, as he says, a considerable trial for him. Again, from three to five he was in another church, I suppose for Vespers and Benediction. Then his father and he took a walk, and in the evening his father visited the sick in a hospital, and took his son with him. Perhaps his father's treatment of him, if we are to trust his recollection and impression of it, might be injudicious; he was lively, curious, and clever, and his father, who was a truly good, pious man, probably did not recollect that the habits of the old are not suitable in all respects to children. Mr. Blanco White complains, moreover, that he

had no companions to play with, and no books to read ; still, it is very strange indeed, that he never took pleasure in Mass and Benediction ; he calls his Sunday employments a “cruel discipline⁵ ;” he describes his hearing Mass as “looking on while the priest went through it⁶ ;” speaking of a season of recreation granted to him, he mentions his religious duties as the drawbacks “on the accession of daily pleasures” he had obtained. However, “mass, though a nuisance, was over in half an hour ; confession, a more serious annoyance, was only a weekly task⁷ ;” and, as if to prove, what I observed above, that no sinful excitement had at this time thrown religion into the shade, he adds, “my life was too happy in innocent amusement, to be exposed to any thing that might be the subject of painful accusation.” No : it was some radical defect of mind. In like manner, saying office was to him never any thing else than a “most burdensome practice⁸.” “Another devotional task, scarcely less burdensome,” was, what, my Brothers, do you think ? “Mental Prayer,” or “Meditation ;” of which he gives a detailed and true description. He adds, “soon after I was ordained a priest. . . . I myself was several times the leader of this mystical farce⁹.” In his boyhood and youth he had to read half an hour and to meditate on his knees another half ; this, for such a boy, might be excessive ; but hear how he comments upon it : “To feel indignant, at this distance of time, may be absurd ; but it is with difficulty that I can check myself when I remember what I have suffered in the cause of religion. Alas ! my sufferings from that source are still more bitter in my old age¹.”

⁵ P. 12. ⁶ P. 26. ⁷ P. 32. ⁸ P. 27. ⁹ P. 29.

¹ P. 29. He goes on to say that he prefers to the vague word

That a person, then, who never knew what Catholicism had to give, should abandon it, does not seem very surprising; the only wonder is how he ever came to be a priest. If we take his own account of himself, it is evident he had no vocation at all; he explains the matter, however, very simply, as far as his own share in it is concerned, by telling us, that he chose the ecclesiastical state in order to avoid what he felt to be more irksome, a counting-house. "I had proposed to be sent to the navy, because at that time the Spanish midshipmen received a scientific education. I could not indeed endure the idea of being doomed to a life of ignorance. This was easily perceived and (probably with the approbation of the divines consulted on this subject) no alternative was left me. I was told I must return to the odious counting-house, from which I had taken refuge in the Church. I yielded, and in yielding, mistook the happiness of drying up my mother's tears, for a reviving taste for the clerical profession ²."

No wonder, under such circumstances, that Mr. Blanco White became an unbeliever; no wonder that his friends and associates became unbelievers too, if their history resembled his. It was the case of active, inquisitive minds, unfurnished with that clear view of divine things which divine grace imparts, and prayer obtains. The only question which concerns us here is, Were there many such ecclesiastics in the Spanish Church? If so, it certainly is a very grave fact; if not so, it is most melancholy certainly, but not an argument, as I can see, against Catholicism, for there are bad men in every place and every

"religion," the use of "true Christianity," but this he gave up at last.

² P. 52.

system. Now it is just here that his testimony fails; there is nothing that I can find in his works to prove that the dreadful disease which he describes had spread even so widely as in France. In the first place, he only witnesses of a small part of Spain. He seems to have only been in three Spanish cities in his life: Seville, Madrid, and Cadiz³; and of these, while Seville is the only one of which he had a right to speak, the metropolis and a seaport are just two of the places, where, if there was laxity, you would expect it to be found. Again, Spain is not, like England, the seat of one people, an open country, with easy communication from sea to sea. On the contrary, you have populations so different, that you may call them foreign to each other, separated, moreover, not only morally, but by the mountain barriers which intersect the country in every direction: one part does not know another, one part is not like another, and therefore Mr. Blanco White's evidence is only good as far as it extends; you cannot argue the state of the northern dioceses from a southern; of Valentia, by what you are told of Seville. Inspect then his narrative itself, and see what it results in. It amounts to this—that in the first years of this century, there were a few priests at Seville who had studied Jansenistic theology, and largely imported French philosophy, and that they ended in becoming infidels, and some of them unblushing hypocrites. I cannot find mention of any except at Seville, and how many there? You may count them. First, “I became acquainted with a member of the upper clergy, a man of great reading, and secretly a most decided disbeliever in all religion.” Secondly, “Through him I was introduced to another

³ He ran down to Salamanca from Madrid, apparently for a day or two.

dignitary, a man much older than either of us, who had for many years held an office of great influence in the diocese, but who now lived in a very retired way. He was also a violent Antichristian, as I subsequently found⁴. Thirdly, an intimate friend of his own, who was promoted from Seville to a canonry of Cordova, and who had been chaplain to the Archbishop of Seville⁵. Fourthly, himself. I am not able to number more, as given on his own personal knowledge⁶, though, rightly or wrongly, he thought many others existed⁷; but this is ever the case with men who do wrong; they quiet the voice within them by the imagination that all others are

⁴ P. 114.

⁵ P. 17. I consider this to be the person mentioned in the "Evidences," p. 132, whom accordingly I have not set down as a separate instance.

⁶ On his visit to Salamanca, he saw Melendez, a Deist (p. 128), who had been one of the judges of the Supreme Court at Madrid; a poet, too; whether an ecclesiastic does not appear.

⁷ Life, p. 117. "*Many other* members of the clergy." If he had definite *knowledge* of others, or more than suspicion, I cannot understand his not giving us the numbers, or the rank, or the dioceses, in short, something categorical, instead of an indirect allusion. The question then simply is, what his suspicions are worth. "Among my numerous acquaintance in the Spanish clergy, I have never met with any one, *possessed of bold talents*, who has not, sooner or later, changed from the most sincere piety to a state of unbelief." Doblado's Letters, v. I observe, 1. He had experience only of one diocese. 2. He evidently does not speak of what he *knew*, when he says, "*who has not, sooner or later.*" 3. Observe, "*possessed of bold talents.*" In like manner, he would, I think, have said, that when he was at Oxford, every one of bold talents agreed with Archbishop Whately, then resident in the University; but every one knows how small that number was. I do not notice a passage in the "Poor Man's Preservative," (Dial. i. pp. 32, 33,) for he is speaking of laity, and what he says of the clergy is very vague. After all, though I have a right to ask for proof, it is not necessary for my *argument* to deny, that the infidel part might have been as large in Spain as in France.

pretty much what they are themselves. I do not trust his inferences.

And so again, as he fell into immoral practices himself, so did he impute the same to the mass of the Spanish clergy, whom he considered as “falling and rising, struggling and falling again⁸,” in a continual course; but here too he could not speak of many on his personal knowledge. It was not to be supposed that a priest, who was both disbelieving what he professed, and was breaking what he had vowed, should possess friends very different from himself. He formed the eighth of a group of ecclesiastics, whom he much admired: one of these, as we have seen, was an infidel; but apparently only one; none of them however were blameless in their moral conduct. Besides these friends of his, he mentions a Priest of a religious Congregation, who had been his own Confessor, in which “capacity he had no fault to find with him, nor could he discover the least indication of his not acting up to the principles he professed⁹,” who however, as he was told by

⁸ Evid. p. 132. Again, he says, “hundreds *might* be found” who live “a life of settled systematic vice.” p. 135. How very vague is “hundreds!” and “hundreds” out of 60,000 seculars, and 125,000 ecclesiastics in all, as I shall mention in the text. Ibid. p. 133. He speaks vaguely of the “crowd” of priests; and he says the best of them, and he knew the best from confession, “mingled vice and superstition, grossness of feeling and pride of office, in their character.” I suspect that coarseness with him was one great evidence of vice; he despised uneducated persons. “I am surprised,” he says of Tavora, Bishop of the Canary Islands (p. 129), “that a man of his *taste and information* accepted the Bishopric of a *semi-barbarous* portion of the Spanish dominions:” though he attributes it “to his desire of improving the moral and intellectual state of those islands.”

⁹ This conscientiousness in his *duty* is remarkable in this priest, even if his account of him is to be believed (for it stands on different grounds from those cases which he *knew*). Of himself, too, he says, his resolution

a young atheist merchant who knew the Priest's "secret courses" well, and, "as he had afterwards sufficient ground to be convinced," if such a vague statement is a sufficient testimony to the fact, "sinned and did penance by rotation¹." Another too is mentioned laden with similar guilt, with whom he had been intimate, but whom he describes as deficient in mere natural principle; this man got involved in money matters and died of vexation².

Ten, or, if it were, twenty bad ecclesiastics form a most melancholy catalogue certainly; Mr. Blanco White says, "hundreds might be found," though not on his personal knowledge; but then you must recollect first, that it was a time apparently of great religious declension, when Spain had imitated France, and a judgment was on the point of

was to do his *duty* to his charge, though an unbeliever. "I will not put myself forward in the Church. I will not affect zeal: whatever trust is put in me, as a confessor, I will conscientiously prove myself worthy of. I will urge people to observe every moral duty. I will give them the best advice in their difficulties, and comfort them in their distress. Such were the resolutions I made, and which, indeed, I *always* (sic) kept, in regard to the confidence reposed in my priestly office. In that respect, I may positively and confidently assert, that I never availed myself of the privileges of my priesthood for any thing immoral." *Life*, vol. i. p. 112. I think my memory cannot play me false in saying, that, in answer to a question once put to him, he declared emphatically, that the bad priests never made use of the confessional for immoral purposes: he said, "They daren't. It would raise the people." Moreover, as time went on, he himself *withdrew altogether* from clerical duty. He speaks of another of the party, who having "for many years held an office of great influence in the diocese, now lived *in a very retired way*." p. 114.

¹ *Life*, p. 121.

² *Life*, p. 104. He speaks (*Evidences*, p. 135) of two priests who died of love. "Love, long resisted, seized them, at length, like madness. Two I knew who died insane." Even granting it, I suppose it was love of *particular objects*. May not Protestants fall in love with persons who will not have them, or are married? Dying for love is certainly an *idea* quite known in England, still more so perhaps in the South.

coming down upon the country. The Jesuits, the flower of the priesthood, whom, as he says himself, "their bitterest enemies have never ventured to charge with moral irregularities," had been barbarously expelled by the government. The Congregation of St. Philip Neri took their place, but though they did a great deal, had not strength, single-handed, to resist the flood of corruption. Moreover, you must consider the number of clergy in a given place or neighbourhood, before you form a judgment upon their state as a whole. The whole number of clergy of Spain at this time amounted to 125,000 persons: of these the seculars were as many as 60,000. In the Cathedral of Seville alone 500 masses were said daily; and the city was divided into twenty-six parishes, and contained besides, between forty and fifty ecclesiastical establishments in addition to the monasteries³. The real question simply is, whether the proportion of bad priests at that time in the city and arch-diocese, was greater than the proportion of bad married clergy in England in the reign, we will say, of George the Second. It is to be remembered too that Catholic priests know each other far more intimately than is possible in the case of a married clergy; in a large city bad priests herd together: married clergymen in respectable station, sin each by himself, and no one of them can turn king's-evidence against the rest.

This being Mr. Blanco White's evidence about the secular priests, about monks and friars he frankly tells us he knows next to nothing, though he thinks them "gross and vulgar." But here, as in the case of the secular clergy, he suspects and believes much evil, which he does not know, and which those only will receive who have implicit reliance on his judgment. As to nuns, he speaks of those

³ Laborde, vol. ii.

of them whom he knew, as for the most part ladies of high character and unimpeachable purity⁴; though some were otherwise, at least to some extent. He seems to allow that reluctant nuns were comparatively few; though he says

⁴ He has a most intense *notion* that they are "prisoners;" but that does not hinder his admitting that they are *willing* prisoners. He thinks the majority live in "*a dull monotony.*" *Life*, p. 67. It is not wonderful that he should take the formal Parliamentary view of nuns, considering that from his youth, as I have said, he, though a Catholic, had apparently as little sense of the Real Presence (*the true and sufficient Paraclete of a Nunnery*) as the House of Commons. The following expressions sketch his idea of a nunnery; let it be observed, *vice* (except as an accident) is absent:—"The minute and anxious narrative of a *nervous recluse.*" p. 66. "*A sensible woman* confined for life." *Ibid.* "*A soul* troubled with all the fears of a *morbid conscience.*" p. 67. "The word Nunnery is a byword for *weakness of intellect, fretfulness, childishness.* In short, nun is the *superlative of old woman.*" p. 69. "Some of them were *women of superior good sense, and models of that fortitude* which," &c. *Ibid.* "One of *those excellent persons.*" *Ibid.* The greater part of the nuns whom I have known, were *beings of a much higher description, females whose purity* owed nothing to the strong gates and high walls of the cloister." *Evid.* p. 135. "Some there are, I confess, among the nuns, who *never seem to long for freedom*; but the happiness boasted of in convents is generally the effect of an *honourable pride of purpose*, supported by a sense of utter *hopelessness.*" *Ibid.* p. 136. "*Suppose* but one nun in ten thousand wished vehemently for that liberty." p. 137. "The *reluctant* nuns, you say, are *few*;—vain, unfeeling sophistry." p. 139. "The *most sensitive, innocent, and ardent minds.*" *Ibid.* p. 141. "Crime makes its way into," (observe, not, is congenial to) "*those recesses.*" *Ibid.* p. 135. "It is a *notorious fact*, that the nunneries in *Estremadura and Portugal*" (not, that is, in Seville and Andalusia) "*are frequently infected with vice of the grossest kind.*" *Ibid.* p. 135. "*Souls* more polluted than those of some never fell within my observation, &c." *Life*, vol. i. p. 70. Observe, "*souls,*" to which he limits the sin, and which he puts in italics, and "*some.*" When it comes to the soul, the evidence is very vague; and this, out of 500, in Seville alone! Such, on the whole, is his evidence against convents: how little of fact, how much of suspicion, contempt, and hatred! how much, again, of involuntary admission in favour of their religious condition!

that many were tormented by scruples, and all would have been much happier had they married. But this is his opinion, as distinct from his testimony; and in like manner he has other strong opinions on the miseries inflicted on men and women by celibacy⁵; but I have no reliance on his judgment, nor had any one, I think, who knew him; he had so much prejudice, and so little patience; while I have the fullest confidence in his word, when he witnesses to facts, and facts which he knew.

Such is this remarkable evidence, remarkable in the witness, and in the things witnessed, remarkable as coming from a person, who had special means of knowing a Catholic country, and whose honour you may depend upon; unlike such men as Ciocci and Achilli, and others, who also have left the Church and borne witness against her, whom no sensible man credits. Here is a man you can trust; and you see how little he has to say to the purpose of Protestantism after all. He makes the most indeed of his little, but he gives us the means of judging for ourselves. Here is no conspiracy of evil, no deep-laid treachery, no disguised agents prowling about, no horrible oaths, no secret passages, trapdoors, dungeons, axes, racks, and thumb-screws; no blood and fire, no screams of despair, no wailing of children, no spectres born of feverish guilt and flitting before the mental eye. Here is little more than what happens every day in England; for I suppose that here in

⁵ The simple question is, whether *more* nuns are eaten up with scruples—*more* are restless and discontented—*more* are old women or old maids—*more* sin grossly, than unmarried women in a Protestant country. Here, as before, I am taking the worst side of things; and nothing of all this, be it observed, disproves, (1) the religiousness of the great majority; (2) the angelic saintliness of many; (3) the excellence and utility of the institution itself, after all drawbacks; which are the points a Catholic maintains.

England there are secret unbelievers, and men who are fair and smooth, but inwardly corrupt, and many a single female wasted by weariness and sadness, and many a married woman cursing the day she ever took her vow ; for these things must be, though they ought not to be, while the nature of man is the same. And moreover, as I have said, the popular voice seems to bear me out in the view I am taking, for this testimony, given under such favourable circumstances against the Church, has been let drop out of print ; for it was after all tame ; it did not do its work ; it did not go far enough ; it was not equal to the demand ; it was not in keeping with the great Protestant Tradition.

No, it must have something huge, enormous, prodigious, because the people love story books, and do not like dry matter of fact. How dull is history, or biography, or controversy, compared with a good romance, the Lives of highwaymen, a collection of ghost stories, a melodrama, a wild-beast-show, or an execution ! What would a Sunday newspaper be without trials, accidents, and offences ? Therefore the poor Catholic is dressed up like a scarecrow to gratify on a large scale the passions of curiosity, fright, and hatred. Something or other we must fear, we must loathe, we must suspect, even if it be to turn away our minds from our own inward miseries. Hence it is, if a stranger comes to a small town, that he furnishes so inexhaustible a supply of gossip to his neighbours, about who he is, what he was, whom he knows, why he comes, and when he will go. If a house is empty for a while, it is sure to be haunted. When learning began to revive, your student was the object of curious horror ; and Dr. Faustus, the printer and, as the nursery rhyme goes, schoolmaster, was made a magician, and is

still drawn as such in poems and romances. When then a Catholic Church is opened in a place, or a monastic body takes up its abode there, its novelty and strangeness are a call for fiction on those who have a talent for invention ; and the world would be seriously disappointed, if all manner of superstition were not detected in the Church's rites, and all manner of wickedness in her priests and nuns.

The popular appetite does not clamour long in vain. It asks, and it is answered. Look at that poor degraded creature, strolling about from village to village, from settlement to farmhouse, among a primitive and simple population. She has received an injury in her head, when young ; and this has taken away, in part, her responsibility, while it has filled her brain with wild ideas, and given it a morbid creative power. Ere she is grown up she leaves her home, and flits here and there, the prey of any one who meets with her. Catholics are all round about her ; as a child she has been in a Catholic school, and perhaps she has from time to time wandered into Catholic Churches. She enters, she peers about ; still and demure, yet with wild curious eyes, and her own wanton thoughts. She sees, at first glance, the sanctity and gravity of the ceremonial : she is struck with the appearance of modesty whether in the sacred ministers or in the sisters ; but her evil heart instantly suggests that what shows so well is nothing but a show, and that close under the surface lies corruption. She contemplates the whole scene, she cannot forget it ; but she asks herself, *what if* it be but a solemn mockery cloaking bad deeds ? The words, the actions, so calm, so gentle, the words of peace, the sacramental actions, she carries them off with an accurate memory ; those verses and

responses, those sweet voices, those blessings, and crossings, and sprinklings, and genuflections. But what if they all be a cloak? And when the priest went out, or when he spoke to any one, what is it all about? And when he was in his confessional, and first one, and then another came to him, what could they be saying? Ah, what indeed! what if it all be but a cloak for sin? There is the point. What if it be but a jest? O the pleasant mischief! the stirring, merry fancy! to think that men can look so grave yet love sin, that women too, who pretend so much, need not be better than she is herself; that that meek face, or those holy hands belong to a smooth hypocrite, who acts the angel, and lives the devil! She looks closer and closer, measuring the limbs, scanning the gestures, and drinking in the words of those who unconsciously go about their duties in her presence; and imputing meanings to the most harmless and indifferent actions. It really is as she suspected, and the truth breaks upon her more and more. Her impure imagination acts upon her bodily vision, and she begins to see the image of her own suspicions in the objects she is gazing on. A sort of mirage spreads through the sacred building, or religious house, and horrors of all kind float across her brain. She goes away, but they pursue her;—what may not have taken place amid those holy rites or within those consecrated walls? The germ of a romance is already fermenting in her brain, and day after day it becomes more developed in its parts, and more consistent in its form.

Poor sinful being! She finds herself in a Penitentiary; no, sure, it is a religious house; so she will consider it; every thing she sees there speaks to her of her feverish dream; the penitents become nuns; the

very rooms, windows, passages, and stairs, she recognizes them as conventual, the very convent which her fancy has been framing. Things utterly separate from each other are confused together in her bewildered mind ; and when she comes into the world again, she thinks herself a nun escaped from confinement, and she now begins to recollect scenes of indescribable horror, which gradually become clearer and clearer. Now, Protestant public, the hour is come ; you have craved after lies, and you shall have your fill ; you have demanded, and here is the supply. She opens her mouth ; she lifts her voice ; your oracle, your prophet, your idol, Oh, Protestant public, is about to speak ; she begins her “ Awful Disclosures ;” who is this hapless creature, very wicked, very mischievous, yet much to be pitied ? It is Maria Monk.

My Brothers, in what I have been saying, I have but given substance in my own way to the facts recorded of her ; but those facts are simply as I have stated them. The history of the wretched impostor was traced out and given to the world immediately on the publication of her romance. It was deposed by divers witnesses that she was born of parents who had lived at Montreal in Canada, about the year 1816. When about seven years old, she broke a slate pencil in her head, and had been strange ever since ; at the age of eight she frequented a convent school ; when about fourteen or fifteen she left her mother’s roof, and is found successively in the service of various persons, an hotel-keeper, a farmer, a tradesman, and others, and then for a time dependent on charity. From one of her mistresses she absconded with a quantity of wearing-linen ; she was discharged by two others for her bad conduct, and was generally looked upon as a person of at least doubtful character. Then

she made her appearance at Montreal itself, declaring she was daughter to Dr. Robertson, a magistrate of the city, who had kept her chained in a cellar for four years. This attempt failing, she next went off to the United States, appeared at New York, and then began a second and a more successful tale against one of the convents of the city she had left, from which she said she had escaped. She was taken up by a party of New York Protestants, who thoroughly believed her, and reduced her story to writing. Who was the author is not quite certain ; two names have been mentioned, one of them a person connected with this very place. In this book, whoever wrote it, she gives a minute description of her imaginary convent in Montreal, and some of the nuns and others she professed to have known there. On the slander making its way to Montreal, Protestants carefully went over the calumniated convent ; and they reported after minute inspection that it in no respect answered to her account of it ; indeed it was certain she had never been within it. It was proved on the other hand, that her description did distinctly answer to a Penitentiary of which she had lately been an inmate, and whence she was dismissed for bad conduct ; and further, that the account she gave of her nuns in the convent answered to some of her fellow penitents. Moreover, there is something about the book more remarkable still, not indeed as it concerns her, but as it concerns the argument I have in several of these Lectures been pursuing. I have insisted much on the traditional character of the fable, of which Catholics are the victims. It is the old lie, brought up again and again. Now this is most singularly exemplified in the infamous work I am speaking of. On its appearance the newspapers of the day asserted, without contradiction,

that it was in great measure a mere republication of a work printed in the year 1731 under the title of "The Gates of Hell opened, or a Developement of the Secrets of Nunneries." "Maria Monk's pamphlet," says a Liverpool paper, "is a *verbatim* copy of that work, the only difference being a change of names." The editor of a Boston paper "pledged himself that this was the fact;" and the editor of another "was ready to make *affidavit* that the original work was in his possession a few months previously, when it had been lent to the publishers of Maria Monk's Disclosures." To show this he copied out passages from both works, which were the same word for word ⁶.

Here then you have a witness who is prepared to go any lengths in support of the Protestant Tradition, however truth or principle may lie in her way; and offensive as it will be to you to listen, and painful to me to read, you must for the sake of the contrast between her and Mr. Blanco White, submit to one or two of those passages from her romance, which I am able without impropriety to quote.

Now first I will give you the key to the whole book considered as a composition, and its burden, and (what may be called) its moral as addressed to the Protestant world. It is an idea, which, as I have already said, was naturally suggested to an impure mind, and forcibly addressed itself to a curious reader. Mankind necessarily proceeds upon the notion that what is within discloses itself by what is without; that the soul prompts the tongue, inspires the eye, and rules the demeanour;

⁶ For these facts, vid. A complete refutation of Maria Monk's atrocious plot, &c., by Rev. R. W. Willson (now Bishop of Hobart Town), Nottingham, 1837.

and such is the doctrine of holy writ, when it tells us that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Hence when strangers visit a nunnery, and see the order, cheerfulness, and quiet which reigns through it, they naturally take all this as the indication of that inward peace and joy which ought to be the portion of its inmates. And again, when strangers attend mass, and observe the venerable and awful character of the rite, they naturally are led to think that the priest is "holding up pure hands," and is as undefiled in heart as he is grave in aspect. Now it is the object of this Narrative to reverse this natural association, to establish the contrary principle, and to impress upon the mind that what is within is always what the outward appearance is not, and that the more of saintliness is in the exterior, the more certainly is there depravity and guilt in the heart. And it must be confessed, there have been cases where what looked fair and beautiful was but a whited sepulchre, "full within of dead men's bones and of all filthiness;" such cases have been and may be, but they are unnatural surely, not natural; the exception, not the rule. To consider this as the rule of things, you must destroy all trust in the senses: when a man laughs, you must say he is sad; when he cries, you must say he is merry; when he is overbearing in words, you must call him gentle; and when he says foolish things, you must call him wise; all because sad hearts sometimes wear cheerful countenances, and divine wisdom sometimes has condescended to look like folly. It is reported to have been said by an able diplomatist, that the use of words is to disguise men's thoughts; but the very wit of the remark lies in the preposterous principle it ironically implies. Yet

still to the run of readers there is something attractive in this perverted and unhealthy notion, both from a sort of malevolence and love of scandal, which possesses the minds of the vulgar, and from the wish to prove others, who seem religious, to be even worse than themselves; and besides, from the desire of mystery and marvel, which prompts them, as I have said before, to have recourse to some monstrous tale of priestcraft for excitement, as they would betake themselves to a romance or a ghost story.

Thus she says in one place, or rather the writers whoever they may be; "I have often reflected how grievously I had been deceived in my opinions of a nun's condition—all the holiness of their lives, I now found, was merely pretended. The appearance of sanctity and heavenly-mindedness which they had shown among us novices, I found was only a disguise, to conceal such practices as would not be tolerated in any decent society in the world; and, as for joy and peace like that of heaven, which I had expected to find among them, I learned too well that they did not exist there⁷.

Again, speaking of a picture of the infernal pit, at which the nuns were looking, she introduces a nun, saying something so dreadful, that a reader hardly knows whether to laugh or to cry at it. "I remember she named the wretch who was biting at the bars of hell, with a serpent gnawing his head, with chains and padlocks on, Father Dufresne; and she would say, Does he not look like him, when he comes in to catechism with his long solemn face, and begins his speeches with, 'My children, my hope is that you have lived very devout lives⁸?'"

In such passages, the object of the writer is to familiarize the reader's imagination to the notion that hypo-

⁷ P. 116.

⁸ P. 82.

crisis is natural, and the ordinary state of things, and to create in him a permanent association between any serious act whatever and inward corruption. They make the appearance of religion the presumption, not of reality, but of hollowness, and their very extravagance is their plausibility. The reader says, "It is so shocking, it must be true ; no one could have invented it."

It is with a view to increase this unnatural plausibility that the writers dwell minutely on various details which happen, or might easily happen, in Catholic Churches and convents. For instance, they say, "The old priest . . . when going to administer (the Blessed Sacrament) in any country place, used to ride with a man before him, who rang a bell as a signal. When the Canadians heard it, whose habitations he passed, they would come and prostrate themselves to the earth, worshipping it as God." Of course, it is so ; Catholics do worship the Blessed Sacrament, because they believe it to be our Lord Himself. Therefore we will say so in our book, for we wish to lie naturally, we wish to root our imposture in a foundation of truth.

Again ; "The bell rang at half-past six to awaken us. The old nun who was acting as night-watch immediately spoke aloud, 'Behold the Lord cometh !' The nuns all responded, 'Let us go and meet Him.' Presently, 'We then kneeled, and kissed the floor'¹."

Now observe the effect of all this : when a person, who never was in a Catholic Church or convent, reads such particulars, when he reads, moreover, of the lattice-work of the confessional, of the stoup of holy water, and the custom of dipping the finger into it, of silence during dinner, and of recreation after it ; of a priest saying

¹ P. 39.

mass with his hands first joined together, and then spread, and his face to the altar ; of his being addressed by the title of “ my Father,” and speaking of his “ children,” and many other similar particulars ; and then afterwards actually sees some Catholic establishment, he says to himself, “ This is just what the book said ;” “ here is quite the very thing of which it gave me the picture ;” and, I repeat, he has, in consequence of his reliance on it, so associated the acts of the ceremonial, the joined hands or the downcast eye, with what his book went on slanderously to connect them, with horrible sin, that he cannot disconnect them in his imagination ; and he thinks the Catholic Priest already convicted of hypocrisy, because he observes those usages which all the world knows that he does observe, which he is obliged to observe, and which the Church has ever observed. Thus you see the very things, which are naturally so touching and so beautiful in the old Catholic forms of devotion, become by this artifice the means of infusing suspicion into the mind of the beholder.

Yes ; all this outward promise of good is but a beautiful veil, hiding behind it untold horrors. Let us lift it, so far as we may do so, without sharing in the writer’s sin. Our heroine has passed through her noviciate, and proceeds to take the vows. Then she learns suddenly the horrors of her situation ; she was, in fact, in a house of evil spirits ; she represents herself, as was very natural, supposing she had been a religious person, overcome by distress, and unable to resign herself to her lot ; and she was told by the Mother Superior, “ that such feelings were very common at first, and that many other nuns had expressed themselves as I did, who had long since changed their minds. She even said, on her entrance

into the nunnery, she had felt like me. Doubts, she declared, were among our greatest enemies. They would lead us to question every path of duty, and induce us to waver at every step. They arose only from remaining imperfections, and were always evidences of sin; our only way was to dismiss them immediately, to repent, to confess them. They were deadly sins, and would condemn us to hell, if we should die without confessing them. Priests, she insisted, could not sin. It was a thing impossible. Every thing they did and wished was of course right ²."

Now, my Brothers, you know there is a divine law written on the heart by nature, and that the Catholic Church is built on that law, and cannot undo it. No priest, no Bishop, no Council can make that right which is base and shameful. In this passage the false witness would make the Protestant world believe, that nuns are obliged to obey their confessors in commands strictly sinful, and horrible, and blasphemous. How different from the true witness, Mr. Blanco White! He said all he could against convents; he never hinted that religious women were taught by the priests that priests could not possibly sin, could not possibly issue a sinful command, could not possibly have a sinful wish; and therefore must be obeyed whatever they asked. His quarrel with the Catholic Religion was that it was too strict, not that it was too lax; that it gave rise to nervousness, scruples, and melancholy. His utmost accusation, except in the case of the unbelieving few, was that he knew some persons, and he believed there were others, who sinned, knew their sin, came and confessed it, and sinned

² P. 35.

again. There was no calling evil good, and good evil. Let her continue her revelations:—

“ She also gave me another piece of information, which excited other feelings in me, scarcely less dreadful. Infants were sometimes born in the convent, but they were always baptized, and immediately strangled. This secured their everlasting happiness; for the baptism purified them from all sinfulness, and being sent out of the world before they had time to do any thing wrong, they were at once admitted into heaven. How happy, she exclaimed, are those who secure immortal happiness for such little beings! Their little souls would thank those who killed their bodies, if they had it in their power ³. ”

“ So far as I know, there were no pains taken to preserve secrecy on this subject. . . . I believe I learned through the nuns, that at least eighteen or twenty infants were smothered, and secretly buried in the cellar, while I was a nun ⁴. ”

The nuns, according to her account, underwent the same fate, if they would not resign themselves to the mode of life in all its details, for which alone, as it would seem, the nunnery was set up. She gives an account of the murder of one of them, and after quoting this, I consider I may fairly be excused from quoting any more.

“ I entered the door,” she says, “ my companions standing behind me, as the place was so small as hardly to hold five persons at a time. The young nun was standing alone, near the middle of the room; she was probably about twenty, with light hair, blue eyes, and a very fair complexion ⁵. ” The poor victim is brought to the Bishop, who, the writer says, “ it was easy to per-

³ P. 35.

⁴ P. 120.

⁵ P. 75.

ceive, considered her fate to be sealed, and was determined she should not escape. In reply to some of the questions put to her, she was silent; to others, I heard her voice reply, that she did not repent of words she had uttered; though they had been reported by some of the nuns who had heard them; that she had firmly resolved to resist any attempt to compel her to the commission of crimes which she detested. She added, that she would rather die than cause the murder of harmless babes. 'That is enough, finish her!' said the Bishop. Two nuns instantly fell upon the woman; and, in obedience to directions given by the Superior, prepared to execute her sentence. She still maintained all the calmness and submission of a lamb." Then they gag her, and throw her on a bed. "In an instant," the narrative proceeds, "another bed was thrown upon her. One of the priests sprung like a fury upon it with all his force. He was speedily followed by the nuns, until there were as many upon the bed as could find room, and all did what they could, not only to smother, but to bruise her. . . . After the lapse of fifteen or twenty minutes, and when it was presumed that the sufferer had been smothered and crushed to death, (the priest) and the nuns ceased to trample upon her, and stepped from the bed. All was motionless and silent beneath it. They then began to laugh," &c.

But I surely need not continue trash, such as this, which is as stupid as it is atrocious. In like manner, she tells us the number of nuns killed, the number who killed themselves, the various penances and tortures which were common, gags, hot irons, glass chewing, and the "cap;" the cells, and every thing which is proper furniture of such an abode. She concludes the book with a solemn

reflection, how hard it is to think aright after thinking wrong. "The Scriptures," she is made to say, "always affect me powerfully when I read them; but I feel that I have but just begun to learn the great truths, in which I ought to have been early instructed. . . . The first passage of Scripture that made any serious impression on my mind, was the text on which the chaplain preached on the Sabbath after my introduction into the house, 'Search the Scriptures:'"—and so the book ends.

I have now described, first, the character of the writer, next, the character of her book; one point alone remains, its reception by the public. The calumny first appeared in 1836, it still thrives and flourishes in 1851. I have made inquiries, and I am told I may safely say that in the course of the fifteen years it has lasted, from 200,000 to 250,000 copies have been put into circulation in America and England. The edition I have used is printed at Nottingham in the *present* year. Vast numbers have been sold at a cheap rate and given away by persons who ought to have known it was a mere blasphemous fiction; at this very time it is found, I believe, in some of the Parochial lending libraries of this place, and I hear rumours concerning some of the distributors, which from the respect I wish to entertain towards their names, I do not know how to credit. Nor have these various efforts been without visible fruit, at least in America. A nunnery was burnt down at Charlestown; and at New York fifty houses, inhabited by Catholics, were also destroyed by fire, which extended to the Cathedral.

And thus I have completed, my Brothers, the contrast I proposed to set before you. A writer of name, of character, of honour, of gentleman-like feeling, who has the *entré* of the first and most intellectual circles of the

metropolis, and is the friend of the first Protestant ecclesiastics of his day, records his testimony against Catholicism, it is in the main true, and it fails : a worthless stroller gets her own testimony put into writing ; it is a heap of fables, and it triumphantly succeeds. Let the people be the judge ;—their award reveals a great fact ; truth is not equal to the exigences of the Protestant cause, falsehood is its best friend.

Nor let it be imagined, my Brothers, that I have unfairly selected my examples, in order to serve a purpose. Men of Birmingham ought more than others to acquit me of this. Only two years have I been here, and each of these two has been signalized by accusations against Catholics, the same in the disreputableness of their authors, and in the enormity of their falsehood, and in the brilliancy of their success, as this of Maria Monk. Two years ago it was Jeffreys, last year it was Teodore. You recollect how Jeffreys acted his part, how he wept, and prayed, and harangued, and raised a whole population against an innocent company of Monks, and how he was convicted of fraud, and confessed his guilt, and was sent to prison : you also recollect how an impostor, called Teodore, declaimed such shocking things, and wrote such indecent pamphlets against us, that they cannot have been intended for any other purpose than to afford merriment to the haunts of profligacy and vice ; yet he was followed for a time, was admitted into Protestant places of worship, and honoured as a truth-telling oracle, till at length he was plainly detected to be what every one from the first would have seen he really was, were it usual to do the same common justice to Catholics which every Protestant considers his due ;—for falsehood is the basis of the Protestant Tradition.

On the other hand, I might give you other instances similar to that of Mr. Blanco White. I might point to Mr. Steimnitz, who, within the last ten years, began his noviciate among the Jesuits, left them, turned Protestant, and published an account of the community he had quitted. He wrote to expose them, and abounded in bitterness and invective; but as to his facts, so little had he to produce from his own personal knowledge to the disadvantage of the institution he was attacking, and so severely did he disappoint the Protestants for whom he wrote, that they considered his work, what they called a Jesuitical trick, and said that he was pretending to attack the good fathers in order really to set them off to advantage;—for truth is no aid to the Protestant Tradition.

Falsehood succeeds for a generation, or for an era; but therein it has its full course and comes to an end. Truth is eternal; it is great, and will prevail. The end is the proof of things. Brothers of the Oratory, surely we shall succeed because “they say all manner of evil against us falsely for His Name’s sake.”

